

A MODEL TOWARDS COMMITMENT: THE ROLE OF  
IRRATIONAL RELATIONSHIP BELIEFS, KNOWLEDGE OF WARNING SIGNS,  
RELATIONSHIP CONFIDENCE AND SATISFACTION

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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## ABSTRACT

### A MODEL TOWARDS COMMITMENT: THE ROLE OF IRRATIONAL RELATIONSHIP BELIEFS, KNOWLEDGE OF WARNING SIGNS, RELATIONSHIP CONFIDENCE AND SATISFACTION

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The present study investigated the relationships between irrational relationship beliefs, knowledge of warning signs, relationship confidence, satisfaction, and commitment among university students. For this aim, a model examining the direct and indirect effects among study variables was tested through the use of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The participants were students from different faculties of a medium-sized university in Turkey (n = 479) who are between 18-26 ages and involved in a romantic relationship. In order to collect data, Relationship Beliefs Questionnaire, Relationship Deciding Scale, Investment Model Scale, and personal information form were used. A pilot study was implemented (n = 411) to adapt Relationship Deciding Scale (RDS) into Turkish, and the results indicated that RDS has adequate psychometric characteristics to use in Turkish sample.

Results of the SEM analysis revealed that irrational relationship beliefs, knowledge of warning signs, relationship confidence, and satisfaction variables explained 28% of the variance in commitment of participants. Among the variables, satisfaction

was the strongest predictor of commitment. On the other hand, irrational relationship beliefs were found positively associated with the study variables contrary to the expectations. Regarding the result of indirect effects, the knowledge of warning signs and relationship confidence partially mediated the relationship between irrational relationship beliefs and satisfaction. Likewise, satisfaction partially mediated the relationship between the RDS variables (the knowledge of warning signs and relationship confidence) and commitment. Additionally, the mediator role of the relationship confidence between the knowledge of warning signs and satisfaction was found significant and full. Finally, the findings of the study were discussed in light of the relevant literature.

**Keywords:** romantic relationships, commitment, satisfaction, relationship beliefs, relationship confidence

## ÖZ

### BAĞLILIĞA YÖNELİK BİR MODEL: İRRASYONEL İLİŞKİ İNANÇLARI, TEHLİKE/UYARI İŞARETLERİ BİLGİSİ, İLİŞKİ GÜVENİ VE DOYUMUN ROLÜ

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Bu çalışmada, üniversite öğrencilerinde irrasyonel ilişki inançları, tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi, ilişki güveni, doyum ve bağlılık arasındaki ilişkiler incelenmiştir. Bu amaçla, çalışma değişkenleri arasındaki doğrudan ve dolaylı etkileri inceleyen bir model, Yapısal Eşitlik Modellemesi (YEM) kullanılarak test edilmiştir. Katılımcılar, 18-26 yaşları arasında ve romantik bir ilişkisi olan, Türkiye’de orta ölçekli bir üniversitenin farklı fakültelerindeki öğrencilerden oluşmuştur (n = 479). Veri toplamak için, İlişki İnançları Ölçeği, İlişkide Karar Verme Ölçeği, İlişki İstikrarı Ölçeği ve kişisel bilgi formu kullanılmıştır. İlişkide Karar Verme Ölçeğini (İKVÖ) Türkçeye uyarlamak için bir pilot çalışma uygulanmış olup (n = 411) bulgular İKVÖ’nün Türkiye örneğinde kullanmak için yeterli psikometrik özelliklere sahip olduğunu göstermiştir.

YEM analizi sonuçları, irrasyonel ilişki inançları, tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi, ilişki güveni ve doyum değişkenlerinin, bağlılığın % 28’ini açıkladığını ortaya koymuştur. Değişkenler arasında, doyum, bağlılığın en güçlü yordayıcısı olarak bulunmuştur. Öte yandan, çalışma değişkenleriyle irrasyonel ilişki inancı arasında beklenenden



farklı olarak pozitif bir ilişki olduğu belirlenmiştir. Dolaylı etkiler incelendiğinde ise tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi ve ilişki güveninin, irrasyonel ilişki inancıyla doyum arasındaki ilişkiye kısmen aracılık ettiği görülmüştür. Benzer şekilde, doyum, İKV değişkenleri (tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi ve ilişki güveni) ile bağlılık arasındaki ilişkiye kısmen aracılık etmektedir. Ayrıca, tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi ile doyum arasındaki ilişkide, ilişki güveninin aracılık rolü anlamlı ve tam olarak bulunmuştur. Son olarak, çalışmanın bulguları ilgili alanyazın ışığında tartışılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** romantik ilişkiler, bağlılık, doyum, ilişki inançları, ilişki güveni

to myself  
&  
to my parents

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Romantic relationships play a vital role in the lives of most people (Kelley et al., 2002; Watson, Hubbard & Wiese, 2000); therefore, great attention has been devoted to romantic relationship studies for the last two decades, especially in recent years. The fact that romantic relationships are so remarkable in young adulthood period stems from the crucial role of involving a romantic relationship during this developmental stage. According to Erikson's (1968) theory of psychosocial development, this stage is defined as intimacy versus isolation, in which love is considered as the basic virtue of the stage. Besides, having a romantic relationship at this stage is more important than it can be at other stages since it is the developmental task of this period (Arnett, 2004; Erikson, 1968). Moreover, the romantic relationships of young adults are associated with their happiness (Demir, 2008; Myers & Diener; 1995), and they have a long-term effect on their later life (Arnett, 2004; Fincham & Cui, 2011). Involving and maintaining a healthy relationship is also important for one's life because its effects can be observed in behavior, feeling, cognition, beliefs and almost every life issue (Furman & Shaffer, 2003; Regan, 2011). Thus, understanding the factors of how and why relationships maintain is important in romantic relationship studies of university students.

In the literature, commitment is considered a core motive in relationships which determine the propensity to engage in relationship maintenance behaviors that serve as a tool for healthy and stable relationships (Rusbult, Drigotas & Verette, 1994). Furthermore, it has been associated with numerous things; more upward positive interpretations, (Morry & Sucharyna, 2016), relationship persistence and

willingness to sacrifice (Etcheverry & Le, 2005), derogation of alternatives (Rodrigues, Lopes, & Kumashiro, 2017; Smith, 2015), social disapproval (Lehmiller & Agnew, 2006), greater parental and friend support (Rodrigues, Lopes, Monteiro, & Prada, 2017), and less violence (Stanley, Whitton, & Markman, 2004). Hence, the current study focuses on commitment, a multidimensional construct of romantic relationships as the dependent variable in developing in-depth knowledge about it. According to Rusbult and Buunk (1993, p.180), commitment is defined as a "subjective state, including both cognitive and emotional components, that directly influences a wide range of behaviors in an ongoing relationship." Commitment also reflects the long-term orientation and intention to maintain relationships for better or worse. In the present study, commitment was examined through the investment model which has in recent years proved to be a useful model to explain relationship phenomena (Regan, 2011).

According to investment model (see chapter 2, for a review), commitment is expounded as the interaction of its bases, namely, satisfaction level, quality of alternatives and investment size. In other words, when an individual is strongly committed to his/her relationship, there are three features: (1) the individual's satisfaction level is high, (2) the individual's quality of alternatives is low, (3) and the individual's investment size is high. However, among the components of the commitment in the investment model, empirical studies showed that satisfaction was the strongest predictor of commitment yet with unexplored parts of it (Le & Agnew, 2003; Lemay; 2016; Sacher & Fine, 1996). Thus, regarding the predictive role of satisfaction in commitment, the present study included only the satisfaction variable to the proposed model. Another reason to include the satisfaction variable to the model is romantic relationship literature. Alongside the commitment, empirical studies mostly indicate the links between satisfaction and other relationship-related variables such as attachment styles (Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994), conflict management (Cramer, 2000), personality (Kashdan et al., 2017), relationship beliefs (Fincham, Harold, & Gano-Phillips, 2000), and well-being (Van Tongeren & Burnette, 2016). Most importantly, previous studies shows that the variables of the present study (irrational relationship beliefs, knowledge of warning signs,

relationship confidence) are associated with satisfaction and help to explain commitment. These will be presented in the following pages.

As can be understood from the definitions of commitment, neither feelings nor cognitions are enough to explain it; however, the interaction of these components constitutes commitment. In other words, a subjective evaluation, including the reciprocity of feelings and cognitions, plays a role in an individual's decision process regarding whether or not to continue to the relationship. According to social cognitive theory, human beings are not solely reactive to external events but also have the capacity to direct thought processes, motivation, and affect in the system of triadic reciprocal causation (Bandura, 1986). In this reciprocal causation, there is interplay of behavioral factors, environmental factors and personal factors (Wood & Bandura, 1989). Additionally, in a comprehensive study conducted by Karney, McNulty and Bradbury (2003), cognition in close relationships was divided into three aspects: the content of cognition; the structure of cognition and process of cognition. The study presented that in the content of cognition aspect, values and beliefs of individuals related to relationships; in the structure of cognition aspect, organization of the relationship-relevant knowledge; and in the process of cognition aspect which has been seen as the producer of the other domains, how relationship relevant information has been processing (i.e., pursuing, evaluating, integrating) were discussed. Regarding these explanations, using social cognitive theory as a guiding framework is appropriate for the present study as well as with the investment model for the purpose of understanding factors affecting commitment.

One of the factors that affect commitment is individuals' beliefs or expectations towards a relationship. Several studies have proved the link between commitment and relationship beliefs (Fitzpatrick & Sollie, 1999; Öztekin, 2015; Sprecher & Metts, 1999). When a relationship is satisfactory for someone, he or she has various beliefs and expectations about what that relationship should be like, and what features that an ideal partner should have (Sprecher & Metts, 1999). These perceptions and expectations of romantic relationships are defined as relationship beliefs (with two categories: rational and irrational beliefs), and they affect people's subjective

judgmental processes and relationship phenomena (Stackert & Bursik, 2003; Eidelson & Epstein, 1982). The terms irrational relationship beliefs and dysfunctional relationship beliefs can be used interchangeably in the literature; accordingly, irrational relationship beliefs is preferred in the present study.

Irrational relationship beliefs have been investigated extensively since they have a particular effect on relationship satisfaction and commitment. Although there are studies linking irrational relationship beliefs to commitment (Fitzpatrick & Sollie, 1999; Vannier & O'Sullivan, 2017a), most of the national and international studies on irrational relationship beliefs focused on their effects on relationship satisfaction, which is one of the bases of commitment (Frazier & Esterly, 1990; Saraç, Hamamcı, & Güçray; 2015; Sarı & Korkut-Owen, 2016). However, findings of the irrational relationship beliefs on relationship satisfaction and commitment have demonstrated inconsistent results. In the literature, the relationship between irrational relationship beliefs and commitment was found to be both positive (Vannier & O'Sullivan, 2017b) and negative (Fitzpatrick & Sollie, 1999). This inspired researchers to examine the relationship deeply through possible mediator variables.

In the present study, relationship confidence, knowledge of warning signs and satisfaction were included as mediators to investigate the association between irrational relationship beliefs and commitment based on the mentioned theories (social cognitive theory and investment model) and research findings. More precisely, alongside the relationship beliefs, two things have an impact on commitment in terms of reflecting the cognitive component of it: knowledge of warning signs and relationship confidence, which are already shaped before starting a relationship and might change during the relationship process. From this perspective, categorizing these variables as personal factors in triadic reciprocal causation of social cognitive theory is meaningful in terms of understanding their contributions to commitment. Additionally, since these variables might change according to the environmental factors, trying to explain them through the help of social cognitive theory seems understandable. Considering satisfaction, which is a component of commitment in the investment model, the social cognitive theory also

might serve as a guiding theory since there is an evaluation process in satisfaction which represents the process part of cognition in relationships, as mentioned above.

As previously stated, the first mediator variable of the present study is satisfaction. Empirical studies clearly and repeatedly indicated that commitment is positively correlated with satisfaction (Fletcher, Simpson, & Thomas, 2000; Neff & Karney, 2003; Rusbult, Martz, & Agnew, 1998; Stafford, Dainton, & Haas, 2000; Toplu-Demirtaş, Hatipoğlu-Sümer, & White, 2013). Moreover, meta-analysis studies showed that satisfaction is the most powerful predictor of commitment regarding the investment model (Le & Agnew, 2003; Tran, Judge, & Kashima, 2019). Considering this particular information, satisfaction was added to the current study as a mediator variable. Nevertheless, while satisfaction is the most influential variable in explaining the commitment, there are still undiscovered aspects of it (Le & Agnew, 2003).

In the present study, to investigate the other factors that might affect the relationship between irrational relationship beliefs and commitment, two mediator variables were added. The first one is knowledge of warning signs which indicate individuals' awareness of risk factors in a relationship and their ability to handle them (Vennum & Fincham, 2011). There are some studies which have showed the role of this on satisfaction and commitment (Clifford, Vennum, Busk, & Fincham, 2017; Davila et al., 2017; Vennum, Monk, Pasley, & Fincham, 2017). Nevertheless, as it is highlighted in the literature, knowledge of warning signs may not be adequate if individuals do not have the confidence or self-efficacy to use their relationship skills. Therefore, relationship confidence was added as another mediator variable for the current study. Previous studies clearly stated that relationship confidence was an important variable in romantic relationship studies primarily to assess the role of it on satisfaction (Büyükşahin, 2005; Cui, Fincham, & Pasley, 2008) and commitment (Riggio, Weiser, Valenzuela, Lui, Montes, & Heuer, 2013; Vennum & Fincham, 2011). Moreover, Wood and Bandura (1989) emphasized the positive role of the self-efficacy beliefs in interpersonal competence and coping ability in social

cognitive theory. Considering this information, relationship confidence might also mediate the relation between knowledge of warning signs and satisfaction.

Despite research studies showing evidence of the association between irrational relationship beliefs and commitment, studies examining the role of knowledge of warning signs, relationship confidence, and satisfaction as a mediator are sparse. In addition to distinct relations among the variables, studies concomitantly using these variables regarding the theories as mentioned earlier are limited. Thus, to determine the relationships between these variables, a structural model (see Figure 1) was proposed in the light of investment model and social cognitive theory.

Concerning the role of gender on commitment, the literature contains inconsistent findings. In some studies, gender was found as a significant factor on commitment (Okutan & Büyükşahin-Sunal, 2010; Stafford & Canary, 1991) while in others it was not (Aslan-Yılmaz, 2019; De Goede, Branje, van Duin, & VanderValk, 2012). In addition to studies mentioned above, Lee and Agnew (2003) provided extensive results in their meta-analysis study regarding the factors affecting commitment and found that gender was not a significant variable on both commitment and satisfaction. Taking into consideration the inconsistent results in the literature, the present study aimed to use multi-group analysis to purify the role of gender in the proposed model.

## **1.2 Purpose of the Study**

As discussed previously, cognitive processes play an essential role in both satisfaction and commitment levels of individuals. Regarding the recent improvements in romantic relationship literature, the main purpose of the study to test a model which investigates the relationships among the irrational relationship beliefs, knowledge of warning signs, relationship confidence, relationship satisfaction, and their impact on commitment level of university students. To examine this purpose, investment model and social cognitive theory were used as background theories to the research.



### 1.3 Research Questions

Deriving from the aim of the study, the following research questions were aimed to answer:

*Research Question 1.* How do university students' irrational relationship beliefs, knowledge of warning signs, relationship confidence and satisfaction levels relate to their commitment level?

Specifically, undermentioned research questions were designed based on the proposed model (see Figure 1)

*Research Question 1.1.* How do irrational relationship beliefs relate to the mediator variables of the study (level of knowledge of warning signs, relationship confidence, and satisfaction) among dating university students?

*Research Question 1.2.* How does satisfaction relate to the commitment among dating university students?

*Research Question 1.3.* How do mediator variables of the study (level of knowledge of warning signs, relationship confidence, and satisfaction) relate to the commitment among dating university students?

*Research Question 1.4.* How do RDS variables (knowledge of warning signs and relationship confidence) relate to satisfaction among dating university students?

*Research Question 1.5.* How does knowledge of warning signs relate to relationship confidence among dating university students?

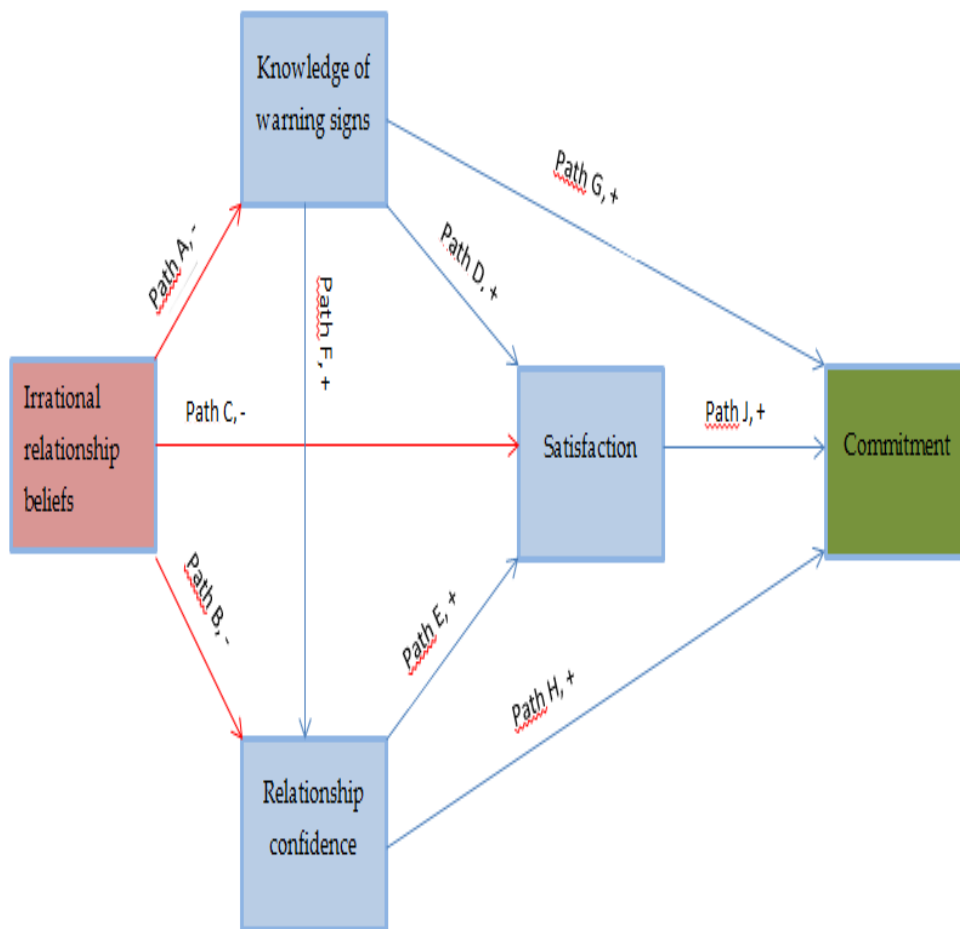
*Research Question 1.6.* How does satisfaction mediate the potential effects of RDS variables (knowledge of warning signs and relationship confidence) on commitment level of dating university students?

*Research Question 1.7.* How do RDS variables (knowledge of warning signs and relationship confidence) mediate the potential effects of irrational relationship beliefs on commitment level of dating university students?

*Research Question 1.8.* How does relationship confidence mediate the potential effect of knowledge of warning signs on having relationship confidence among dating university students?

*Research Question 1.9.* Do the hypothesized relationships in the model differ with regard to gender?

*Research Question 2.* Is RDS valid and reliable measure to use in Turkish culture?



*Figure 1.* The conceptual diagram of the hypothesized model

#### **1.4. Hypotheses**

In line with the research questions, following hypotheses were constituted:

*Hypothesis 1.* A statistically significant amount of variance in commitment is explained by the personal cognitive factors and satisfaction among dating university students.

Regarding the hypothesis 1, following sub-hypotheses were created to examine the direct paths in Figure 1.

*Hypothesis 1.1.* There will be a significant negative relationship between irrational relationship beliefs and knowledge of warning signs variables (see Path A). In other words, university students' who have more irrational relationship beliefs will have less knowledge of warning signs.

*Hypothesis 1.2.* There will be a significant negative relationship between irrational relationship beliefs and relationship confidence variables (see Path B). In other words, university students' who have more irrational relationship beliefs will have less relationship confidence.

*Hypothesis 1.3.* There will be a significant negative relationship between irrational relationship beliefs and satisfaction variables (see Path C). In other words, university students' who have more irrational relationship beliefs will be less satisfied in their relationships.

*Hypothesis 1.4.* There will be a significant positive relationship between knowledge of warning signs and commitment variables (see Path G). In other words, university students who have more knowledge of warning signs will be more committed to their relationships.

*Hypothesis 1.5.* There will be a significant positive relationship between relationship confidence and commitment variables (see Path H). In other words, university students who have more relationship confidence will be more committed to their relationships.

*Hypothesis 1.6.* There will be a significant positive relationship between satisfaction and commitment variables (see Path J). In other words, university students with higher level of satisfaction will be more committed to their relationships.

*Hypothesis 1.7.* There will be a significant positive relationship between knowledge of warning signs and satisfaction variables (see Path D). In other words, university

students' who have more knowledge of warning signs will be more satisfied in their relationships.

*Hypothesis 1.8.* There will be a significant positive relationship between relationship confidence and satisfaction variables (see Path E). In other words, university students' who have more relationship confidence will be more satisfied in their relationships.

*Hypothesis 1.9.* There will be a significant positive relationship between knowledge of warning signs and relationship confidence variables (see Path F). In other words, university students' who have more knowledge of warning signs will have more relationship confidence in their relationships.

***Hypothesis 2.*** The relationship between RDS variables (knowledge of warning signs and relationship confidence) and commitment will be mediated through satisfaction.

Regarding the hypothesis 2, two sub-hypotheses were created:

*Hypothesis 2.1.* The relationship between knowledge of warning signs and commitment will be mediated through satisfaction. In other words, university students' who have more knowledge of warning signs will be more satisfied in their relationships, which in turn, increase their commitment to their relationships.

*Hypothesis 2.2.* The relationship between relationship confidence and commitment will be mediated through satisfaction. In other words, university students' who have more relationship confidence will be more satisfied in their relationships, which in turn, increase their commitment to their relationships.

***Hypothesis 3.*** The relationship between irrational relationship beliefs and satisfaction will be mediated through RDS variables (knowledge of warning signs and relationship confidence).

Regarding the hypothesis 3, two sub-hypotheses were created:

*Hypothesis 3.1.* The relationship between irrational relationship beliefs and satisfaction will be mediated through knowledge of warning signs. In other words, university students who have more irrational relationship beliefs will have less knowledge of warning signs, which in turn, decrease the level of satisfaction.

*Hypothesis 3.2.* The relationship between irrational relationship beliefs and satisfaction will be mediated through relationship confidence. In other words, university students who have more irrational relationship beliefs will have less relationship confidence, which in turn, decrease the level of satisfaction.

*Hypothesis 4.* The relationship between knowledge of warning signs and satisfaction will be mediated through relationship confidence. In other words, university students who have more knowledge of warnings signs will have more relationship confidence, which in turn, increase the level of satisfaction.

*Hypothesis 5.* RDS is a valid and reliable measure to use in Turkish culture.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The present study is valuable not only for romantic relationship literature in particular but also in the field of guidance and psychological counseling.

Initially, a deeper understanding of romantic relationships will significantly help counselors and practitioners who work with students attending a university. In the university period, which usually corresponds to emerging adulthood, people are expected to initiate a romantic relationship, choose a partner for cohabitation, and maintain that relationship (Arnett, 2004). They are also in a period where they explore their expectancies toward a romantic relationship as well as toward life in general. Therefore, romantic relationships in the university period are more important for individuals than in other life stages. Besides, as Erikson (1968) indicated in his psychosocial theory, the young adulthood period is defined as intimacy versus isolation stage where forming an intimate relationship with a significant other is the main concern of this stage. Individuals who successfully

complete this stage become more likely to experience healthy and successful relationships. Furthermore, Ooms and Wilson (2004) stated that the university period is considered a "reachable moment," where individuals are more inclined to learn about romantic relationships. With this in mind, examining the factors that affect relationship dynamics among university students is worthwhile. By this way, the factors that are effective for a long-term, healthy, and satisfying relationship and the degree of the effect of these factors can be revealed in this study. Hence, the present study is important because it investigates the relationships between irrational relationship beliefs, knowledge of warning signs, relationship confidence, satisfaction, and commitment in a structural model.

Moreover, a multi-group analysis -an advanced statistical analysis- was employed for the current study to examine the gender differences in the proposed model. Specifically, the factors affecting commitment in the proposed model were tested for male and female participants through the multi-group analysis to see if there was a difference between women and men participants in the same model. Testing the models through multi-group analysis is uncommon in Turkish literature. Thus, using multi-group analysis contributes to the significance of the study in terms of clarifying gender effect on the model; which in turn, increase its statistical power.

Furthermore, this thesis proposes two determinants in decision-making: being aware of the risks in an ongoing relationship and being able to take appropriate actions. Because the risk factors in relationships increase the constraints that make it difficult to leave the relationship by serving as a trap, it is meritorious to determine individuals' decision-making process from the sliding versus deciding perspective. In this way, it could be possible to understand and take preventive actions for risks in relationships. Thus, using the sliding versus deciding model to understand the decision-making process among Turkish university students also widens the present study's contributions by allowing any cultural differences to be clarified.

Another contribution of the present study is for the implications for counseling practices. One of the primary reasons for students to apply to university counseling

centers for psychological help is romantic relationship problems (Erkan, Özbay, Cihangir-Çankaya & Terzi, 2012; Küçükarslan, 2011). By taking into consideration the previous studies' findings, counselors should prepare relationship education programs for students to give information about the relationship dynamics in a preventive way (Fincham, Stanley & Rhoades, 2011). More specifically, students should be enlightened and gained insight about the role of appropriate relationship beliefs, decision-making processes they use in their relationships, and accordingly, the factors affecting satisfaction and commitment through increasing their awareness via these programs. In other words, this study will contribute to counseling practices by providing a deeper understanding of the relations of the study variables in which counselors may transform these findings into their knowledge and actions.

The last contribution of the present study is providing a new instrument to the literature. Additionally, the RDS was developed based on the sliding versus deciding model, which is also new to the Turkish literature. In this model, the decision-making processes of individuals during important transition periods in romantic relationships are discussed with sliding or deciding terms. Basically, sliding reflects lack of active decision making while deciding reflects vice versa. Hence, an adaptation study for the RDS would help researchers and practitioners who intend to assess individuals' thoughtfulness in relationships. Besides, with the help of adapting RDS, conducting cross-cultural studies would be possible.

In conclusion, the present study is expected to contribute to the literature by putting a new measure (RDS) into use and gaining an extensive comprehension of relationship dynamics in terms of study variables.

## **1.6 Definition of Terms**

The operational definitions of the study variables were introduced below.

*Irrational Relationship Beliefs* reflects individuals' basic dysfunctional relationship beliefs towards romantic relationships (DeBord, Romans, & Krieshok, 1996).

*Knowledge of Warning Signs* is defined as “individuals’ awareness about and ability to deal with relationship risk factors” (Vennum & Fincham, 2011, p.740).

*Relationship Confidence* reflects “individuals’ perceptions of their relationship skills and confidence in having a long-lasting relationship” (Vennum & Fincham, 2011, p.740).

*Satisfaction* reflects the attraction to one’s relationship or degree of positive affect associated with the relationship (Rusbult, 1983).

*Commitment* reflects “long-term orientation, including feelings of attachment to a partner and desire to maintain a relationship” (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993, p.180).



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter addresses the literature related to the study variables in three main sections. In the first section, background theories and models for the study variables are presented. Then, study variables are introduced with their definitions and conceptualizations as well as empirical studies conducted with them. In the last section, a summary of the literature is given.

#### **2.1 Background Theories and Models for the Study Variables**

As previously mentioned, commitment, which reflects the individuals' subjective state, including both cognitive and emotional components in an ongoing relationship, can be influenced by many factors (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993). In the present study, various elements were included in the study as related factors with commitment; irrational relationship beliefs, relationship confidence, knowledge of warning signs, and relationship satisfaction. People evaluate their relationships using the factors mentioned above to conclude their relationship outcomes. Several theories provide explanations for these subjective evaluations. Among these theories, one of the most used is the investment model. The present study used the investment model as a background framework due to commitment is composed of the interaction of feelings and cognitions and there is an evaluation process of these components by making comparisons. Moreover, while evaluating relationships based on comparisons, reciprocity of feelings and cognitions are involved. Thus, in addition to the investment model, the social cognitive theory was applied as the other background theory to explain the associations between study variables. Before presenting the investment model in detail, interdependence theory should be given since the investment model is rooted in its scope.

### 2.1.1. Interdependence Theory

Interdependence theory, which was suggested by Kelley and Thibaut (1978) and Thibaut and Kelly (1959), emerged from social exchange theory, like other theories in relationship maintenance. Like social exchange theory, interdependence theory is based on the assumption that individuals stay in relationships based on the ratio of the benefits of interaction in a relationship. The basic characteristic of interdependence theory is the interaction that allows individuals to influence their partners' choices and alternatives. Individuals acquire either positive or negative outcomes through interaction. Precisely, positive outcomes represent rewards such as serenity, joy, achievement, while negative outcomes reflect costs like anger, discomfort, disappointment. In order to better understand interdependence theory, some important concepts should be explained.

*Outcome value* is the first concept related to interdependence theory and represents the subjective evaluation of the quality of the relationship. While evaluating the quality of the relationship, individuals use the main principle of social exchange theory, which emphasizes the importance of the ratio of rewards to costs. More specifically, individuals stay in relationships when the rewards (joy, comfort, success) are higher than costs (time, energy, discomfort) (Regan, 2011; Rusbult & Arriaga, 1999). On the other hand, sometimes individuals decide to stay in relationships even when they are not happy with the level of the rewards in the relationship. Interdependence theory explains this issue by proposing two standards people use in evaluating process: Comparison level (CL) and Comparison level for alternatives (CL<sub>alt</sub>). CL, a standard that can be affected by past experiences, and social comparison are used to evaluate the relationships and means the qualities of outcomes that individuals want to experience in relationship. CL<sub>alt</sub>, a standard that people use to make judgments about whether to stay in their relationships or not, reflects the lowest level of outcomes in which individuals needs can be fulfilled *outside* such as in another relationship, by friends, family members, or on one's own. CL is related to satisfaction, whereas CL<sub>alt</sub> is related to dependence.

*Satisfaction level*, which represents the positive affects related to a relationship, can be determined by the extent to which the outcomes of the relationship exceed the CL. For instance, if the outcomes of the relationship are higher than the CL, an individual evaluates his/her relationship as satisfying. On the other hand, as Kelley and Thibaut (1978) indicated, satisfaction with a relationship (am I happy?) is not enough to continue in a relationship. Individuals consider alternatives, which affect the dependence on a relationship (shall I stay?) to make decisions about their relationships. If the outcomes of a relationship exceed the CL<sub>alt</sub>, the dependence level of the individuals increases as well as persistence in relationships. However, if the outcomes of a relationship fall behind the CL<sub>alt</sub>, the dependence level of the individuals decreases as well as the possibility of electing to break up.

Now the main concepts of interdependence theory have been explained. However, As Rusbult and Arriaga (1999) stated, these concepts are not stable; they can change during a relationship process. People in long-term relationships are inclined to consider their relationship as granted and this situation may result in a decrease in satisfaction level. Hence, people in relationships use various cognitive precautions to prevent the decrease in satisfaction level of their relationships and dependence on an ongoing relationship. In order to understand which factors affect the persistence in relationships, the investment model was developed based on the interdependence theory (Rusbult, 1980; 1983).

Before giving a detailed explanation about the investment model, the role of interdependence theory in the literature should be explained. Briefly, interdependence theory contributed to the literature in two aspects: The first is related to the separation of relationship satisfaction and dependence terms. The second is related to the effect of external factors such as cultural values and alternatives while evaluating relationship processes, which emphasizes the social cognition process in relationships.

### 2.1.2 Investment Model

Investment model was developed by Rusbult (1980, 1983) based on the key concepts of interdependence theory and by examining the factors affecting persistence in relationships. Like interdependence theory, investment model differentiates between the satisfaction and dependence terms, and pays attention to the role of satisfaction and quality of alternatives in decisions of whether to remain in a relationship (Rusbult, 1983). However, there was a gap in the relationship maintenance literature to explain the stability of some relationships in which there is an attractive alternative and the outcomes of the relationship are lower than the expectations (Rusbult et al., 1994). Therefore, Rusbult aimed to answer the inadequacy of the interdependence theory by adding a third factor affecting commitment. She aimed to explain why these relationships continue even when they were not expected to. More precisely, to explain relationship stability, investment model focuses on commitment level, which consists of satisfaction level, quality of alternatives and investment size factors (Rusbult, 1980, 1983). Recent empirical studies using different participants and methodologies showed that investment model is one of the most useful frameworks in understanding relationship dynamics (Regan, 2011). In the following paragraphs, the key terms of this model are presented in detail.

*Commitment level* refers to the extent of the feelings of psychological attachment to a partner and intention to stay in the relationship or to maintain a relationship in the longterm (Rusbult, 1980, 1983; Rusbult & Buunk, 1993). Previous studies documented well that commitment is a good predictor of persistence in relationships (Etcheverry & Le, 2005; Etcheverry et al., 2013). According to the investment model, Rusbult (1980, 1983) proposed that commitment consists of three determinants: satisfaction level, quality of alternatives and investments. Specifically, if an individual is satisfied with the relationship, has fewer alternatives and the investment size is high, the commitment level of this individual increases.

*The satisfaction level* is the level of positive feelings and affects, which are shaped by the extent to which a partner's important needs are met in the relationship. More

precisely, people are inclined to feel satisfied if the outcome value of their relationship exceeds their CL (Rusbult et al., 1998). To feel satisfied, these important needs may be either material or psychological as well as either subjective or objective. For instance, sexual satisfaction, sense of humor, physical appearance are examples of these important needs. On the other hand, even if it is quite common to see satisfactory relationships persist over time, satisfaction is not enough to predict commitment by itself (Rusbult, 1980). As Rusbult and Buunk (1993) indicated that relationships in which people are satisfied but less committed tend to terminate and it is possible to see people in these kinds of relationships as involved in other relationships even if they are not satisfied. Recent studies examining the role of satisfaction in predicting commitment showed that satisfaction is the strongest predictor among the components of commitment (Etcheverry et al., 2013; Rodrigues et al, 2017; Toplu-Demirtaş et al., 2013; Tran et al., 2019).

*Quality of alternatives* refers to the quality of the individuals' possible alternatives outside the relationship. Alternatives can be any options such as another partner, spending time with friends, or being alone, and they provide more rewarding outcomes than the current relationship. Considering these explanations, Rusbult and Buunk (1993) indicate that if the quality of the alternatives increases, the level of commitment to the relationship may decrease.

*Investment size* is the third factor in explaining commitment and refers to the significance of the resources that are connected to the relationship. Investments can be defined as any extrinsic or intrinsic resources that an individual puts into the relationship and in case of termination of the relationship, they were likely to lose value or be lost (Rusbult, 1980). Additionally, investments can be categorized as direct or indirect. Time, energy, self-disclosure, and mental effort in a relationship can be identified as direct investments, whereas mutual friends, children, and common ownership are defined as indirect investments (Rusbult et al., 1994). Time and mental effort are the most used resources to explain the role of investments on commitment because the time spent with the partner and effort that an individual makes in relationships cannot be replaced if the relationship ends. Therefore,

situations like these may have an increasing effect on the commitment to the relationship by serving as barriers or traps that put the individual in the relationship. In other words, ending a relationship means losing investments as well. As a result, the more resources are put into the relationship, the more losses are likely to be experienced in case of relationship termination. To sum up; satisfaction level, quality of alternatives, and investment size comprise commitment. Specifically, on the one hand as the satisfaction level and the investment size increase, the commitment level also increases. On the other hand, the quality of the alternatives is negatively associated with commitment. Since commitment, the subjective interpretation of dependence on a partner, is the important factor determining the stay-or-leave decision in relationships, it is important to consider both negative and positive situations that contribute to the commitment level of an individual. In other words, sometimes commitment can be caused not by positive factors, but by negative factors which in turn cause feeling trapped in the relationship (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993).

### **2.1.3. Social Cognitive Theory**

Maintaining a healthy and satisfactory relationship is not an easy thing because relationships can be affected by a wide range of variables. Therefore, applying one theoretical framework seems inadequate for relationship studies. The present study aims to understand factors contributing to commitment and their specific roles on the proposed model, which includes cognitive factors in addition to investment model variables. Therefore, the social cognitive theory, in addition to the investment model, was taken into consideration while examining and organizing the proposed model.

According to social cognitive theory, people are not only shaped by either internal factors or external factors, but they are also affected by both of these factors and the interaction of them. Bandura (1986) stated that the terms of the social and cognitive are not far from each other, and people learn not only by their observations of others, they also use their own cognitive processes, such as making evaluations about their observations. Furthermore, Bandura expanded his explanation using

reciprocal determinism at first and then triadic reciprocity, which emphasizes the interaction between the behavior, cognitive and personal factors, and environmental factors. In other words, “people are both the products and the producers of their environment” (Wood & Bandura, 1989, p.362).

According to Karney, McNulty and Frye (2001), changing the evaluations in the relationship or keeping them same is a cognitive phenomenon. Additionally, as previously mentioned, relationship satisfaction is not sufficient in predicting the stay/leave decision. Investment model indicated that individuals are likely to make evaluations for their relationships to determine whether their relationship outcomes exceed their comparison level (CL) and comparison level for alternatives (CL<sub>alt</sub>). On the other hand, regardless of their culture, people are not neutral while entering a relationship; they bring their beliefs and attitudes to the relationship as personal cognitive factors (Berscheid & Ammazzalarso, 2003). Previous studies focused on individuals’ cognitions such as expectations, beliefs, standards, and attachment models to investigate how evaluations of a relationship change or stay stable (Karney et al., 2001).

Another reason to apply social cognitive theory to the proposed model of the current study is the link between commitment to a relationship and the relationship maintenance mechanisms. According to Rusbult, Olsen, Davis, and Hannon (2001), relationship maintenance mechanisms, which are defined as pro-relationship behaviors and cognitive transformations for stable and healthy relationships, are positively associated with commitment. The relationship maintenance mechanism is divided into two categories; behavioral maintenance mechanisms and cognitive maintenance mechanisms. Specifically, acts to sustain couple well-being are defined as behavioral maintenance mechanisms, while mental restricting for the sake of relationship functioning is included in cognitive relationship mechanism. Namely, accommodation, willingness to sacrifice, and forgiveness are the types of behavioral maintenance mechanism; while cognitive interdependence, positive illusion, and the derogation of tempting alternatives are included in the cognitive maintenance mechanism. All of the outcomes of these relationship maintenance mechanisms,

regardless of whether they are behavioral or cognitive, are beneficial for commitment in an ongoing relationship even if they involve personal costs. For instance, in highly committed individuals, people are inclined to derogate alternatives even if they narrow their options.

In addition to these explanations, relationship maintenance mechanisms follow the principle of reciprocity. As people use the relationship mechanisms, the level of their commitment increases too. Besides, as the commitment level of individuals increases with these behaviors, the probability of showing these relationship maintenance mechanisms to keep the relationship functioning well increases too. Furthermore, a change in one partner may cause a change in the other partner, which is a principle of interdependence theory (Rusbult et al., 2001).

The other reason to apply social cognitive theory to the present study is related to the principle of social cognition. According to the social cognitivists, the process is more important than the outcome and the focus is on the individualistic aspect (Leyens, Yzerbyt & Schadronek, 1994). In particular, Karney et al., (2001) emphasized the importance of studying the change in relationship satisfaction with cognitive variables such as relationship beliefs to make clear their effect on relationships. As an example of the link between cognition and relationships, they focused on the role of cognitive aspects on relationship measures which are used to assess relationship quality. From this point of view, since the present study aims to understand the factors contributing to commitment, it seemed to be appropriate to benefit from social cognitive theory.

All in all, considering the relationship between commitment and the applications of social cognitive theory into relationship phenomena, it appears beneficial to use social cognitive theory as a guiding framework for the current study along with the investment model.

#### **2.1.4 Sliding versus Deciding Model**

The sliding versus deciding model was developed by Stanley, Rhoades and Markman (2006) to understand people's decisiveness in relationships. Briefly, the



sliding versus deciding model aims to investigate the decision-making process of individuals while important changes are taking place during relationships, based on the commitment model of Stanley and Markman (1992). Deciding reflects the making explicit decisions in important transitions in relationships such as having sex, living together, while sliding means the lack of decision-making processes or letting things happen without paying attention in these transition situations. As expected, the degree of sliding versus deciding behaviors of individuals had an effect on their relationship functioning as well as their life. Individuals who slide through transitions like cohabiting, having sex, and becoming pregnant are at risk not only in their relationships but also in their future life. Sliding increases the risks and constraints which are factors that affect relationship satisfaction and commitment by trapping individuals. In other words, the possibility of maintaining an unhealthy relationship is likely to increase because of the constraints established with sliding compared with individuals who pay attention to deciding thoroughly on transitions (Stanley et al., 2006).

Furthermore, being unaware of the warning signs in relationships or disregarding the dangers are included in the reasons for sliding. In addition to these, even if individuals are aware of risks but feel inadequate to manage with these warning signs, the sliding might increase too (Vennum & Fincham, 2011).

From this point of view, the sliding versus deciding model is used to conceptualize relationship confidence and knowledge of warning sign variables of the current study, which were assessed by the Relationship Deciding Scale developed within this model.

## **2.2 Conceptualizations of Study Variables**

### **2.2.1 Commitment**

In the context of romantic relationships, commitment has been explained in many studies where different definitions and various theories or models are proposed.

Interdependence theory, which emerged from the social exchange theory, is one of the best-known theories in the literature due to its strong emphasis on commitment

(Thibaut & Kelley, 1959; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). According to Thibaut and Kelley, (1959) commitment is conceptualized as dependence which occurs when an individual has low standards to evaluate relationships (low comparison level) but gets more positive outcomes from the relationship and have poor alternatives to the relationship (comparison level-alternatives). In a situation like the above, the commitment level of an individual is expected to be high.

Another definition of commitment was offered in the investment model- one of the most studied models in the literature, so do the present study. The investment model conceptualizes commitment as “long-term orientation, including feelings of attachment to a partner and desire to maintain a relationship” (Rusbult & Buunk, 1993, p. 180). In other words, to be more committed to a relationship, one should have a higher level of satisfaction, show more investments, and have poor alternatives. Briefly, commitment occurs as a result of the interaction of these three factors. In the literature, the applicability of the investment model is not limited to romantic relationships but also includes many different areas (Rusbult, Kumashiro, Coolsen, & Kirchner et al., 2004). Although the investment model has been used widely to study commitment over the years, various definitions have continued to emerge, in attempt to emphasize different aspects of commitment. For instance, Agnew, Van Lange, Rusbult, & Langston (1998) pointed out that dependence and commitment are not the same constructs and the role of individuals' psychological states in the definition of commitment is not provided for within the investment model. More specifically, being in a position to remain in the relationship establishes dependence and does not mean that one has the willingness to commit that relationship. From this point of view, commitment is explained through three components: conative, cognitive and affective. Rusbult et al. (2001) explained them by giving clear descriptions: Conative components of commitment reflect the intent to persist in the ongoing relationship; cognitive component represents the long term orientation and the expectation of relationship will remain in future; and affective component includes psychological attachment to each other.

Levinger's cohesiveness model that other commitment theories are grounded on explains commitment by emphasizing the role of two critical components: attraction to the relationship and barriers of leaving. Attraction to the relationship can be comprised of sexual enjoyment, gaining prestige with the relationship, companionship, among others. Barriers for leaving, on the other hand, represent personal, moral and external factors. More precisely, personal factors are identified as feelings of obligation such as dependency to the children; moral factors are defined as moral prescription such as religious convictions; and external factors are called as external pressures such as prejudice for divorce and financial problems (1965, 1979; as cited in Agnew, 2009).

Another model that divides commitment into subcategories is Johnson's model (1991, 1999 as cited in Agnew, 2009), which describes personal, structural and moral components/factors. Personal commitment, which resembles the attraction in Levinger's model, is identified the feeling of "wanting to" staying in the relationship. The other two parts of the commitment in Johnson's model reflect the barriers in Levinger's model. Structural commitment, which is also called "have to" commitment, is explained in parallel with external factors such as consequences of divorce, having children, among others. The moral commitment or "ought to" commitment, contains the religious beliefs and personal values that keep individuals in a relationship.

Stanley and Markman (1992) proposed a two-dimensional model for commitment: dedication (personal commitment) and constraints (structural commitment). Dedication or personal commitment refers to the desire of an individual to stay in a relationship while constraints or structural commitment refers to the barriers and obstacles that affect an individual's decision to leave the relationship (Stanley et al., 2004). In their study, Stanley and Markman (1992) grouped constraints in three categories: perceived constraints, material constraints, and felt constraints. Social pressure and the consequences of terminating a relationship can be given as examples of perceived constraints, whereas buying a house together, having a pet,

or sharing the same car are examples of material constraints. An example of felt constraints is the feeling of being trapped in a relationship.

Thus, it appears that commitment researchers have preferred to categorize commitment concerning reasons that affect one's stay-or-leave decisions. In other words, they mainly focus on the differentiation of "want to stay" and "have to stay" commitments. In addition to categories of commitment, there is also a variety of subjects that can be observed in studies on commitment. One of these subjects is the issue of attachment. Etcheverry et al. (2013) examined attachment and commitment from a broader perspective by conducting three consecutive studies. They studied all dimensions within a whole model to examine the direct and indirect effects among the variables. The results of the first study showed that satisfaction level, quality of alternatives, and investments mediated the relationship between attachment dimensions (anxiety and avoidance) and commitment in a sample of 334 university students involved in a romantic relationship. In addition to these findings, the second study, carried out with 205 university students, cast light on the relationship between attachment dimensions (anxiety and avoidance) and relationship maintenance behaviors (accommodation and willingness to sacrifice) as mediated through commitment. In the third study, the commitment mediated the relationship between the attachment and the persistence of the relationship as expectedly in the sample of 395 individuals in long distance relationships.

Commitment has also been studied in terms of relationship features. Rhoades, Stanley and Markman (2010) investigated the predictive roles of commitment elements on relationship stability in a sample of 1184 individuals involved in romantic relationships. For this purpose, they used Stanley and Markman's (1992) commitment framework which emphasizes the dedication and constraints (perceived, material and felt) as the determinant of commitment. They conducted their study with a large unmarried adult sample to determine the predictive power of commitment elements on relationship stability. According to their results, dedication, material and perceived constraint were positively associated with commitment whereas felt constraint was negatively associated and they had a

predictor role on relationship stability. In addition to this research, Büyükşahin and Hovardaoğlu (2007) examined the factors affecting individuals' commitment using investment model framework in a sample of dating (n=100), engaged (n =74) and married (76) individuals. Their results showed that except for the quality of alternatives variable, there was no gender difference on investments, satisfaction level, and commitment of participants. Moreover, considering the dating status (dating, engaged or married), participants involved in a relationship reported the lowest level of relationship satisfaction compared with the engaged and married participants.

In the literature, another variable that has been linked to commitment is personal reactions to some factors that might affect the level of commitment. Arriaga, Slaughterbeck, Capezza, and Hmurovic (2007) examined the relationship between commitment and vulnerability to partner imperfections among 41 couples. Results yielded that highly committed individuals are not easily affected by the negative information about their partners while less committed individuals are more likely to be negatively affected. Moreover, when the researchers implemented a manipulation regarding the negative feedback about their partners, they discovered that less committed individuals are significantly influenced while highly committed individuals are not. A year later, Etcheverry, Le, and Charania (2008) studied the role of social network members' opinions regarding an individual's relationship in predicting the relationship persistence in the sample of 254 romantically involved college students. Specifically, in order to examine the social network members' role on persistence, they focused on two aspects: subjective norms (a partner's perception social network opinions towards that relationship) and normative beliefs (perceived approval or disapproval of a friend's opinion of one's romantic relationship). Results showed that individuals were more likely to perceive their peer support positively regarding their relationship even if it did not accurately reflect the actual level of support. Additionally, results yielded that the commitment level of the individuals mediated the relationship between subjective norms and relationship persistence.

Commitment has also been studied in consideration of the jealousy factor. In a study conducted by Rydell, McConnell, and Bringle (2004), the impact of jealous on commitment was investigated in two studies carried out with individuals involved in a serious romantic relationship. The role of threats in the experience of jealousy among high and low committed individuals was examined with 59 participants in study 1 and according to results, highly committed individuals showed more jealousy than low committed individuals when they lacked attractive alternatives. Moreover, in study 2 conducted with 79 individuals, the researchers examined the causal role of threats by using manipulative situations to disclose their role in the relationship between commitment and jealousy. Results indicated that relationship commitment moderates the effect of interaction among internal and external factors in experiencing jealousy.

A recent study conducted by Hadden, Harvey, Settersten and Agnew (2018) put forth the role of investment model variables in the change or maintenance of the relationship categorization for its sample of 422 young adults. With this study they were able to show how investment model variables could predict the progress of relationships. More precisely, they investigated the roles of satisfaction, quality of alternatives, investments and commitment in the change of the relationship categorization from friendship or less serious dating to dating exclusively or engagement and vice versa. Further, they also examined the change process at different times among the exclusively dating participants having different levels of investment model variables. Results demonstrated that satisfaction, investments, and commitment levels of participants predicted the change in the relationship categorization either from friendship / less serious dating to dating exclusively / engagement and vice versa. Additionally, quality of alternatives predicted the change from dating exclusively / engagement to friendship / less serious dating categorization. Lastly, researchers concluded that investment model variables were significant predictors of relationship changes (progression or regression) in a four month period.

Overall, there is a consensus in the literature emphasizing the decisive role of commitment in relationship stability, with a focus on variables such as attachment, personal factors, and relationship characteristics.

### **2.2.2 Relationship Beliefs**

The subject of relationship beliefs can be found in the literature as a content aspect of cognition in close relationships (Karney et al., 2003). They reflect individuals' beliefs and expectations about how relationships should be, which characteristics an ideal partner should possess, and when a relationship succeeds in satisfying both partners (Sprecher & Metts, 1999; Stackert & Bursik, 2003; Eidelson & Epstein, 1982). Different terms (beliefs, assumptions, standards, ideals, values and expectations) are used in the literature to examine different perspectives on the content of cognition in relationships. On the other hand, Baucom et al. (1989) indicated that these terms are not indeed differentiated from each other in representing the different aspects of cognitive content. Thus, in the following paragraphs, relationship beliefs literature will be summarized with the help of studies containing different terms.

To understand the frameworks in explaining cognitive content, Karney et al. (2003) proposed three highly influential factors in relationship studies. Firstly, as the cognition in relationship literature mainly focuses on the content domain (beliefs, assumption, expectations), the emphasis is on the distinction between the general beliefs and specific beliefs towards a relationship. Specifically, Fletcher and Thomas (1996) proposed a base which is the differentiation of the general beliefs that people hold regarding relationships and specific beliefs that people hold regarding specific relationships they have had or have been involved in. They aimed to understand how a person's overall evaluation of his or her own relationship might be affected by these general and specific beliefs. According to Karney et al. (2003), research studies have also tried to understand the integration of specific beliefs with global beliefs in a relationship. An explanation for this integration indicates that when asked to evaluate certain facets of their relationships, individuals tend to report their global impressions of the relationship as opposed to their specific beliefs (Weis, 1980; as cited in Karney et al., 2003).

Secondly, there is a focus on the impact of irrational relationship beliefs' on relationships. To understand the role of irrational relationship beliefs, several measures were developed (Baucom et al., 1996; Epstein & Eidelson, 1982; Sprecher & Metts, 1989). However, there is an inconsistency between the findings regarding the effect of relationship beliefs. For instance, spouses who have a high level of irrational relationship beliefs are likely to report lower relationship satisfaction (Bradbury & Fincham, 1993; Epstein & Eidelson, 1981). Conversely, spouses who have a high level of standards are likely to report higher relationship satisfaction (Baucom et al., 1996). This situation signals the dominant role of certain conditions in linking the evaluations of a specific relationship with general beliefs (Karney et al., 2003).

According to Karney et al. (2003), the third aspect that influences the relationship studies is the interdependence theory which shares the previous two aspects' features. Based on interdependence theory principles (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959), the level of satisfaction or cost of a relationship can be determined by whether a specific situation in a relationship surpasses the individuals' values or comparison level for relationships. In other words, the same situational conditions may affect individuals' global evaluations of a relationship differently due to their beliefs and values.

Following these explanations, Karney et al. (2003) conceptualized cognitive content in their study in two categories: beliefs and values. According to them, the main reason for this classification was caused by two methodological issues. The first one is related to the measurement of the constructs. There are several measures to assess the content of cognition (Baucom et al. 1996; Epstein & Eidelson, 1982; Sprecher & Metts, 1989); however, the items of these measures are overlapping, which in turn, increases the possibility of type one error. In other words, significant relationships might result from not simply the pure association between them, but from measuring the same construct twice (Fincham & Bradbury, 1987 as cited in Karney et al. 2003). The second methodological problem is explained with the inappropriate differentiation of the constructs (i.e., beliefs, expectations, standards, values), which



might occur due to the item overlap problem. Therefore, Karney et al. (2003) used the terms of belief and values to explain the content domain of cognition. Consistent with the literature, they defined beliefs as the general ideas, theories, and assumptions of relationships or specific expectations and predictions in a relationship about the future of relationship; where values are defined as the standards and ideals of individuals towards the relationship. Mainly, standards are beliefs that individuals think should occur while ideals represent the individuals' beliefs they hope occur.

Relationship beliefs may impact relationship processes differently, depending on its classification as rational or irrational (Stackert & Bursik, 2003; Eidelson & Epstein, 1982). In the literature, most studies focus on irrational relationship beliefs and their roles on marital adjustment, satisfaction, and commitment (Bradbury & Fincham, 1988; DeBord et al., 1996; Fitzpatrick & Sollie, 1999; Gizir, 2013; Hamamcı, 2005; Sari & Owen, 2016).

An alternative approach put forth by Epstein and Baucom (2002) states that relationship beliefs can be grouped into two categories: assumptions and standards. They define an assumption as the beliefs about the nature of the relationship either generally or regarding a specific partner. On the other hand, standards include one's views about relationship features such as future potential or partner behavior. The literature indicates that relationships are affected if one of the partners has unrealistic assumptions or standards. In other words, if individuals' beliefs are too rigid or too far from reality, the quality of their relationship weakens (Whisman, Uebelacker, Riso, du Toit, Stein, & Young, 2007).

Another aspect to consider within the area of relationship beliefs is implicit theories emerged from social cognitive theory which underlies the relationship process in two parts: destiny and growth beliefs. Destiny beliefs indicate the critical role of the initial perceptions towards one's relationship to predict its longevity whereas growth beliefs focus on changes in a relationship in time with effective conflict resolution (Knee, 1998). Specifically, individuals who possess growth beliefs are more committed and have the desire to maintain a relationship while individuals

with high destiny beliefs are affected either positively or negatively. For instance, those who have the "soulmate belief" – a kind of destiny belief – can be affected positively by increasing the sense of fulfillment or wholeness in a relationship but also this kind of relationship could establish irrational relationship beliefs which create sensitivity to a negative event leading to break-up (Franiuk, Cohen, & Pomerantz, 2002).

Empirical studies have indicated that destiny beliefs interact with positive illusions which in turn increase relationship satisfaction. In other words, people who have "soulmate belief" and believe that their partner was "the right person" reported more relationship satisfaction compared to individuals with strong destiny beliefs but who do not believe their partner was the "right one" (Franiuk et al. 2002).

In the literature, the development process of the beliefs and expectations about relationships are explained from different scholarly perspectives. One of these perspectives indicates that relationship beliefs can be developed both in the relationship process and before starting a relationship. More precisely, as the relationship continues, partners get to know each other well and this familiarity allows them to make better predictions about their relationships. In this case, familiarity enables one partner to make appropriate evaluations of the other partners' behaviors under certain conditions. Predicting a partner's behaviors in a particular situation may allow individuals to manage their behaviors for the sake of their own benefits in the interaction with their partners. Furthermore, the sources of the relationship beliefs are not only limited to the direct interaction between partners or observations of a partner's behavior. Rather, relationship beliefs can be affected and shaped by previous relationship experiences. Moreover, one's past observations' of other people's relationships as well as readings and hearings about relationships may affect the establishment of relationship beliefs (Berscheid & Ammazalorso, 2003; Segrin & Nabi, 2002).

Beliefs and expectations which affect relationships positively or negatively are shaped not only by internal factors such as personal characteristics and interaction between spouses but also by external factors such as culture and social norms.

People who share the same culture are likely to have similar expectations from partners or relationships (Berscheid & Ammazalorso, 2003). For instance, they hold similar expectations regarding how a husband/boyfriend or wife/girlfriend should look and behave.

Although irrational relationship beliefs have been examined in numerous studies, there are still many unknown elements of this concept (Stackert & Bursik, 2003). For instance, much has yet to be explored regarding the role of demographic variables and relationship features in irrational relationship beliefs. In the literature, usually included in the relationship beliefs studies are factors including gender, dating status, grade, and culture (Gizir, 2013; Küçükarslan & Gizir, 2014; Sprecher & Toro-Morn, 2002).

To begin with, gender was one of the factors that affects having irrational relationship beliefs. In a study conducted with 742 university students, Gizir (2012) carried out the Turkish adaptation study of Relationship Beliefs Questionnaire developed by DeBord et al. (1996) and results of this study yielded that males are more likely to have irrational relationship beliefs than females. Additionally, among 957 university students included in a study conducted by Küçükarslan and Gizir (2014), men showed higher scores than women on “love finds a way” and “love at first sight dimension” of Relationship Beliefs Scale developed by Sprecher and Meths (1989). Sprecher and Toro-Morn (2002) also examined the gender differences in two different cultures (North America and China) in a total sample of 1428 university students, and they both found that there is gender and culture effect on relationship beliefs among university student participants. For instance, Chinese men were found to be more romantic than Chinese women and Chinese participants overall were less likely to have destiny beliefs than Americans.

Gündoğdu, Yavuzer and Karataş (2018) examined the role of irrational relationship beliefs in predicting aggression among 656 emerging adults and found that there was no difference on total irrational relationship beliefs scores of participants regarding gender. However, when the sub-dimensions of irrational relationship beliefs are considered, the only significant difference regarding gender was found

related to the social time dimension, indicating that males showed more irrational beliefs than women.

Vannier and O'Sullivan (2017a) investigated the role of unmet romantic expectations in predicting investment model variables (satisfaction, quality of alternatives, investments and commitment) in a sample of 296 dating young adults. Results yielded that unmet romantic expectations based on ideal relationships or alternative relationships were both negatively correlated with satisfaction and commitment. Metts and Cupach (1990) examined the interaction between the irrational relationship beliefs and problem-solving behaviors in a sample of 322 university students who were involved in a heterosexual romantic relationships. They found that destructive problem-solving methods were negatively associated with irrational relationship beliefs; whereas constructive problem-solving methods were positively associated. Additionally, irrational relationship beliefs were found as a predictor of relationship satisfaction; however, the relationship between them was provided with problem-solving methods.

Moreover, dating status – a label which aims to clarify the participants' past and present experiences about the romantic relationship – is also another demographic variable that affects the development of irrational relationship beliefs. Past research has indicated that relationship beliefs can be affected by dating status (Deveci-Şirin & Soyer, 2018; Gizir, 2013; Sprecher & Metts, 1999). These studies showed that participants who previously experienced a break-up decreased their idealization beliefs (Sprecher & Metts, 1999) and university students who are involved in a romantic relationship for the first time in their lives were more likely to have irrational beliefs (Gizir, 2013).

Regarding school grade differences, Küçükarslan and Gizir (2014) found that in a sample of 957 university students, freshmen and sophomores have higher scores on "one and only" and "idealization" subscales of Romantic Beliefs Scale as compared to seniors.

Personality is one of the most studied factors with relationship beliefs. Flett, Hewitt, Shapiro and Rayman (2001) carried out a study with 69 university students in dating relationships and found that perfectionism, especially self-oriented and other-oriented perfectionism, were associated with higher irrational relationship beliefs where socially prescribed perfectionism was related to maladaptive relationship behaviors. Considering the associations between the three types of perfectionism and relationship beliefs, it was concluded that having a higher standard in certain areas of relationship beliefs may result in negative outcomes for those relationships. Attachment styles were also studied in regard to relationship beliefs. Deveci-Şirin and Soyer (2018) focused on the predictor roles of the attachment styles on relationship beliefs which were measured using the Romantic Beliefs Scale. Their findings in a sample of 407 university students showed that adult attachment styles (anxiety and avoidant) were associated with relationship beliefs.

There are many studies in the literature focusing on implicit theories (destiny and growth beliefs about romantic relationships). Knee, Patrick, Vietor and Neighbors (2004) found in their study that growth beliefs – being more related to relationship maintenance than destiny beliefs – moderated the relationship between conflict and commitment in a sample of 128 individuals involved in a heterosexual romantic relationship. More precisely, individuals who are higher in growth beliefs were less affected from the negative aspects of conflicts than people in destiny beliefs since growth beliefs established a buffer zone in the link between conflict and commitment.

Irrational relationship beliefs have also been studied in married couples. In a study conducted with 384 married couples, irrational relationship beliefs were negatively associated with relationship satisfaction and explained 2.8 % of the variance in relationship satisfaction (Kemer, Çetinkaya- Yıldız, & Bulgan, 2016).

All in all, the literature shows the importance of relationship beliefs for commitment by integrating several variables into the studies. However, there is an inconsistency in clarifying the effects of relationship beliefs as being positive or negative.

### 2.2.3 Relationship Satisfaction

Satisfaction with the relationship is another variable of the present study. Satisfaction refers to the extent to which a person feels that he relationships offers more rewards, at lower costs, when the quality of relationship exceeds their comparison level (Rusbult, Johnson & Morrow, 1986). The importance of romantic relationship satisfaction among university students has been emphasized in many studies. For instance, Fincham and Cui (2011) summarized the essential role of romantic relationships among young adults with three features of relationships: being a developmental task; an influential factor on individuals' well-being and a predictor for the future life. Moreover, Arnett (2000) indicated that the characteristics of romantic relationships change in emerging adulthood in terms of becoming more serious, more intimate, and lasting longer. Furthermore, Erkan, Cihangir-Çankaya, Terzi, and Özbay (2011) indicated that problems related to romantic relationships were one of the primary reasons for students to apply for psychological help.

In the present study, relationship satisfaction was conceptualized with the investment model which is grounded on the interdependence theory principles. As previously mentioned, satisfaction level reflects the positive feelings and affects regarding the ongoing relationship in the interdependence theory, while the investment model defines satisfaction level as the level of positive feelings and affects that are shaped with the extent that a partner's essential needs are met in the relationship. In other words, people are inclined to feel satisfied if the outcome value of their relationship exceeds their comparison level (CL) (Rusbult et al., 1998).

In the literature, romantic relationship satisfaction has been studied through the measurement of several variables. Of these, commitment and relationship stability are most emphasized due to the extent that they are impacted by relationship satisfaction (Fehr, 2003). Hendrick (2004) indicated that relationship satisfaction is important not just because of its comprehensive construct but also because of its role on the decision to continue a relationship. For instance, in a study conducted with dating couples, participants lower in relationship satisfaction were found to be more

likely to end the relationship (Hendrick et al., 1988). However, relationship satisfaction is not sufficient to explain relationship maintenance (Rusbult et al., 2004).

In the literature, there are several studies conducted on romantic relationship satisfaction with particular variables such as interpersonal traits (Ault & Lee, 2016), self-monitoring and self-consciousness (Aslan-Yılmaz, 2019), travels (Durko & Petrick, 2015), social network sites (SNSs) (Rus & Tiemensma, 2017), sexuality (Lewandowski & Schrage, 2010), and relationship beliefs (Sarı, 2008).

Kemer et al. (2016) examined relationship satisfaction with irrational relationship beliefs and emotional dependency in a sample of 384 married people. Results yielded that gender did not predict relationship satisfaction whereas the length of the relationship did. Furthermore, irrational relationship beliefs were negatively associated with relationship satisfaction and explained the 2.8% of the variance while emotional dependency predicted relationship satisfaction positively with 30% variance in relationship satisfaction. Likewise, Mavruk- Özbiçer and Atıcı (2018) indicated no gender difference regarding relationship satisfaction among 546 college students in their study. They also found a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and relationship satisfaction.

Social networks sites (SNSs) was another repeatedly emphasized topic in relationship satisfaction studies in the last two decades (for a review see Rus & Tiemensma, 2017). Most of these studies are focused on the influences of SNSs on relationship quality. Elphinston and Noller (2011) investigated the impact of Facebook usage on relationship satisfaction through romantic jealousy in a sample of 305 college students. Results demonstrated that individuals' level of Facebook intrusion affects their relationship satisfaction negatively and increases the feeling of jealousy. Additionally, González-Rivera and Hernández-Gato (2019) aimed to develop a scale to assess the impact of too much Facebook use regarding its effects on conflict situations in the relationship in a sample of 300 adults involved in a romantic relationship at least for one year. The results revealed a three-dimensional scale (partner facebook intrusion, conflict over facebook use, and jealousy over

facebook use) with adequate psychometric characteristics. Likewise, in another study examining the effect of social media use on relationship outcomes in 252 dating or married individuals, it was found that SNSs addiction is negatively associated with relationship commitment (Abbasi, 2018).

The impact of the travels on relationship quality is one of the new topics in relationship literature. According to Durko and Petrick's study (2015), the role of vacation satisfaction on empowering the relationship satisfaction and commitment was investigated using the investment model framework in a sample of 355 individuals who had taken a vacation with their significant other within the previous two years. Findings indicated that vacation satisfaction predicted 47% of the variance in relationship satisfaction level.

Troy, Lewis-Smith and Laurenceau (2006) studied the relationship satisfaction on interracial and intraracial romantic relationships to see the difference between the groups in two studies. Their hypotheses were contradicted by the study outcomes. Since they were expecting individuals in interracial relationships to report lower relationship satisfaction, individuals indicated higher level of relationship satisfaction than individuals in intraracial relationship in Study 1 conducted with 118 couples. Considering the result of study 1, a second study was carried out by the researchers to replicate the findings in a sample of 109 couples. In the second study, relationship efficacy was also added to the variables. The results of Study 2 revealed that levels of relationship satisfaction and relationship efficacy did not differ in individuals either in interracial or interracial romantic relationships.

To conclude, recent studies on relationship satisfaction mostly focused on the effects of technological improvements and the types of relationships such as interracial or intraracial on relationship satisfaction as well as replicating the importance of relationship beliefs in affecting satisfaction level.



#### **2.2.4 Relationship Deciding Variables (Knowledge of Warning Signs and Relationship Confidence)**

Alongside irrational relationship beliefs and relationship satisfaction, knowledge of warning signs and relationship confidence are included in the present study to examine how commitment is affected by participants' thoughtfulness in relationships. The terms knowledge of warning signs and relationship confidence were conceptualized within the sliding versus deciding model, the former defined as one's awareness of danger signs in the relationships while the latter refers to one's confidence in his or her ability to manage a healthy relationship.

Whitton et al. (2007) defined relationship confidence as a sense of efficacy in managing conflicts with a partner. Then, scholars proposed another definition of relationship confidence, adding an emphasis on an individual's confidence in being able to develop a healthy future relationship (Stanley, Rhoades, & Williams, 2007 as cited in Hardy et al. 2015; Vennum & Fincham, 2011). Thus in the literature, the terms relationship confidence and relationship efficacy are closely related. Therefore, in order to explain relationship confidence, studies on relationship efficacy were taken into consideration as well.

Relationship confidence is also important for its effect on shaping one's approach to relationship interactions. In one study, relationship efficacy was found to be associated with more constructive conflict resolution tactics and pro-relationship behaviors which provide a satisfying and successful relationship (Cui et al., 2008). As for relationship confidence, it has been considered to be an individual characteristic which can be affected by one's family context. For instance, Bryant and Conger (2002) indicated that individuals who experienced negative feelings in their family are more likely to possess positive expectations for their future relationships. Additionally, Whitton, Rhoades, Stanley & Markman (2008) stated that parental divorce is correlated with lower relationship confidence among women.

To the knowledge of the researcher, studies including relationship deciding variables were limited in the literature as well as studies focusing on these factors

directly. Therefore, the following paragraphs contain empirical studies in the existing literature that center on knowledge of warning signs and relationship confidence factors either independently and jointly.

In order to assess individuals' decision-making processes within the sliding versus deciding model, Relationship Deciding Scale (RDS) has been offered as an instrument of measure (Vennum & Fincham, 2011). To expand the usage of RDS in the European context, Boffo and Mannarini (2015) carried out an adaptation study for the Italian version of the RDS in a sample of 426 university students. Results revealed that the Italian version of the RDS has adequate psychometric characteristics for use in the Italian population. Another study that aimed to investigate individuals' awareness regarding warning signs in the relationships introduced a new measure to the literature (Kearney & O'Brien, 2018). The researchers conducted two studies in the samples of 433 women and 330 men college students respectively to examine the psychometric appropriateness of the Relationship Red Flags Scale (RRFS) which they had developed. According to results, RRFS has 25 items with five dimensions indicating adequate validity and the reliability evidence for female and male participants.

Intimate partner violence, or dating violence, was another highly studied topic in relation to knowledge of warning signs and relationship confidence variables. One recent study investigated the effectiveness of Text Messaging Intervention (TMI) on increasing the participants' knowledge of warning signs in relationships and confidence in taking appropriate actions in case of experiencing intimate partner violence in a sample of twenty students (Constantino, de la Cruz, Hwang, Henderson, & Braxter, 2014). Towards this aim, the researcher carried out a mixed method strategy in which participants were expected to express their views about TMI and completing a survey. Results indicated that the levels of knowledge of warning signs and confidence in building healthy relationships among participants were increased as a result of TMI. Moreover, participants indicated that TMI was a useful tool for educating people about intimate partner violence. Likewise, Guidi, Magnatta and Meringolo (2012) pointed out the importance of recognizing the

warning signs in the relationship to avoid becoming a victim of dating violence, paying particular attention to studies that emphasize the role of prevention programs in order to support and educate people about healthy relationships.

Another study conducted by Hardy et al. (2015) examined the associations between relationship confidence, knowledge of warning signs and problem-solving strategies in a sample of 200 emerging adult couples from China. In this study where relationship confidence was represented by marital confidence, researchers examined the mediating role of marital confidence between the knowledge of warning signs and constructive problem-solving. As was expected, attention to the knowledge of warning signs was directly and indirectly connected with constructive problem-solving strategies via marital confidence.

Relationship confidence was discussed in the literature as both a dependent variable and independent variable. Approaching relationship confidence as an outcome variable, recent studies have looked at the impact of relationship education programs. A study conducted by Visvanathan, Richmond, Winder and Koenck (2015) on the effect of relationship education programs on relationship confidence investigated in a sample of 706 individuals. To examine the change in the level of relationship confidence, participants were asked to complete pre- and post-tests aiming to measure the efficacy of the education program. As predicted, results demonstrated that relationship confidence improved with the help of relationship education programs. Building on this, another study carried out with 126 participants who participated in a relationship education program explored the role of group cohesion among members and the alliance between members and leaders in the change of the relationship. Results showed that only group cohesion among members affected the relationship confidence level of participants.

In Zhang's (2014) study, relationship confidence was studied in serial arguments with anger, compassion and perceived resolvability variables. Specifically, the roles of anger and compassion on relationship confidence and the mediator role of perceived resolvability in those relationships were investigated in a sample of 151 college students. According to results, relationship confidence was negatively

associated with anger while compassion was positively associated. Moreover, the perceived resolvability mediated the effect of anger and compassion on relationship confidence. Dostal and Langhinrichsen-Rohling (1997) studied the role of the family of origin divorce and abuse in relationship-specific cognitions among 112 college students. According to results, relationship efficacy of participants who indicated physical victimization from their father was lower than participants who did not report any victimization. The dating status of the participants was determined in relation to the level of relationship efficacy. For instance, participants who are involved in a relationship are higher in relationship efficacy than participants who are not involved in a relationship.

### **2.3 Summary of the Review of Literature**

In the last two decades, an increasing number of studies on romantic relationships have been carried out with the aim of getting a better understanding of the romantic relationship experiences of university students. In particular, considerable attention has been devoted to determining the factors affecting commitment levels of university students engaged in active dating. Various theoretical perspectives have explained commitment from different perspectives. Among these is the investment model which is built on interdependence theory principles and which was one of the most frequently utilized theoretical backgrounds for explaining commitment since it emphasized the role of investments on commitment. Specifically, the investment model explains commitment as the interaction of three components: satisfaction level, quality of alternatives and investment size. In other words, neither feelings nor cognition are enough to explain commitment since it is a constitution of both feelings and cognition. Hence, to explain commitment, the social cognitive theory is used in addition to the investment model.

Individuals' beliefs or expectations of a relationship were found related to level of commitment. Irrational relationship beliefs were often at the center of relationship belief studies due to its significant effects on commitment. However, there might be other variables that facilitate the relationship between irrational relationship beliefs and commitment. These additional variables including relationship confidence,

knowledge of warning signs and satisfaction were reviewed in detail throughout the literature.

Although there is evidence of a direct association between irrational relationship beliefs and commitment, studies investigating the mediating role of knowledge of warning signs, relationship confidence, and satisfaction are sparse both in national and international studies. Hence, investigating the relationships among the study variables in the proposed model and clarifying the unique contributions of the variables is essential for understanding commitment phenomena.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHOD

In this chapter, methodological procedures of the current study were summarized in seven sections. In the first section, research design of the study was explained. In the second section, participants of the study were introduced. The third section consisted of data collection instruments. After that, data collection procedures were given in the fourth section. Data analyses procedures used in the current study were presented in the fifth section. Then, definitions of the study variables were described in the sixth section. Finally, limitations of the current study were discussed in the last section.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The main aim of the current study was to test a model that investigating the relationships between irrational relationship beliefs, knowledge of warning signs, relationship confidence and satisfaction and their impact on commitment level of dating college students. With this aim, overall research design of the study was designed as correlational which is a kind of an associational research. Correlational research is defined with the best-known definition of it as examining the relationships between two or more variable without any manipulation. Moreover, in line with the general aim of the current study, which was to predict an outcome among variables, correlational research provides researchers to make predictions about a criterion variable considering the relationships of it with several other predictor variables (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Huyn, 2012).

### 3.2 Participants and Sampling

Participants of the current study were consisted of undergraduate students who had involved in a romantic relationship at the data collection time, enrolled in medium-sized university in West Black Sea Region. As a data collection procedure for the study, several sampling methods were used. Firstly, participants were involved in the study by using convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is used when a researcher aims to collect data from available context at that particular time (Robson, 2011). Another sampling procedure used in the study was purposive sampling which is used while studying with groups specific characteristics (Robson, 2011). Since participants must meet the criteria which were being an undergraduate student in the study university, being between 18-26 years-old and involved in a romantic relationship, purposive sampling was utilized for the current study.

After applying these sampling procedures, 560 students participated in the study; however, 31 of them were excluded from the study in data screening process since they were not involved in a romantic relationship or leaving most of the questions blank. Following this, 17 participants who defined their relationship status as married were also excluded from the study. Because as stated by Stanley et al. (2004), different features of marriage dynamics may affect the commitment level of participants through the various aspects. Penultimately, outliers were checked before the data analyses, total of 33 cases determined as outliers were removed from the dataset. Finally, 479 participants constituted the main sample of the present study. Participants' demographic characteristics are presented in Table 1.

As it can be seen in Table 1, of the 479 participants, 305 (63.7%) were female and 174 (36.3%) were male. The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 26 with a mean of 21.32 ( $SD = 1.81$ ). Also, their relationship duration ranged from 1 months to 97 months with a mean of 24.52 ( $SD = 21.16$ ). In terms of their relationship characteristics, most of the participants (80.8 %) defined their relationship type as a serious relationship. The remained participants indicated their relationship types as followings; 14.6 % of them as dating, and 4.6 % of them as engaged.

Table 1

*Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 479)*

Variables	<i>f</i>	%
Gender		
Female	305	63.7
Male	174	36.3
Relationship Type		
Dating	70	14.6
Serious relationship	387	80.8
Engaged	22	4.6

### 3.3 Data Collection Instruments

In order to collect data, Relationship Beliefs Questionnaire (DeBord et al., 1996), Relationship Deciding Scale (Vennum & Fincham, 2011), Investment Model Scale (Rusbult et al., 1998), and a personal information form were used, and the psychometric characteristics of the instruments were presented in detail in the following sections.

#### 3.3.1 Relationship Deciding Scale (RDS)

Vennum and Fincham (2011) developed the Relationship Deciding Scale (RDS) in order to examine thoughtfulness regarding relationship decisions, awareness of and ability to deal with warning signs in a relationship, and confidence in being able to maintain a relationship concept based on the sliding versus deciding model. In the initial steps of the developing RDS, there were 13 items; however, one of them is excluded according to the explanatory factor analysis results. Then, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted and according to results, RDS consisted of 12 items with 3 subscales namely, relationship confidence, knowledge of warning signs, and deciding and explained the 63% of the variance. It is a 5-point Likert type scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) and has two reverse items (item 8 and item 12). Higher scores in the relationship confidence, knowledge of warning signs, and deciding subscales are indicative for the higher level of



participants' perception of confidence to maintain a relationship, awareness of danger signs in relationship and thoughtfulness in a relationship, respectively. The internal consistency coefficients of RDS were assessed with testing Cronbach alpha coefficients for factors. Relationship confidence which measures confidence in being able to maintain a relationship yielded the score of .90 Cronbach alpha coefficients which indicates high reliability. Knowledge of warning signs which measures the awareness of and ability to deal with warning signs in a relationship had the score of .80 Cronbach alpha coefficients indicating high reliability. Deciding which measures the thoughtfulness regarding relationship decisions yielded the score of .71 Cronbach alpha coefficients indicating acceptable reliability.

In the present study, RDS was adapted to Turkish by the researcher in line with the purpose of the study.

### **3.3.1.1 Translation and adaptation of the RDS**

The adaptation study started with gaining official permission from the authors of the scale to translate the RDS to Turkish (See Appendix D). In this step, forward translation-back translation method was used. First, the 12 items were translated into Turkish by four academicians who had proficiency in both languages. Three of them were PhD candidates working as research assistants in the field of psychological counseling and while one was from the clinical psychology field working as an instructor and a psychotherapist. Secondly, the four translations were compared studiously and for each item, the ones who best reflect the original meaning were chosen by the researcher and her supervisor. After then, two academicians (PhD candidates) working as research assistants in the field of psychological counseling were asked to back-translate the items into English. These items were compared with the original items and evaluated. After the completion of back translation, three academicians from the Department of Turkish Language (two of them were PhD candidates working as research assistants and one of them was an assistant professor) reviewed the Turkish version of the scale with regard to grammar and fluency. Very minor mistakes were identified and corrected. Then, cognitive interview process was employed which provides the researcher to reveal

which cognitive process the participant undergoes while responding to the instrument. Twenty students were asked to fill out the scale carefully. Except for two of the students who attribute negative meaning to the «discuss» word, participants indicated that they did not have any difficulty while completing the scale. Hence, it was concluded to use the scale without any change while collecting data.

### **3.3.1.2 Participants**

Participants were consisted of undergraduate students from a medium-sized university in West Black Sea Region. Convenience sampling and purposive sampling procedures were applied in gathering data. In data collection process, the researcher aimed to use participants' faculty as strata to represent the university population better. However, after data cleaning procedure, some of the participants were excluded from the study which caused the changes in the percentile of faculty variable. As a result, it can be concluded that participants of the study reflect almost close distribution of the number of enrolled students. Table 2 shows the faculty percentiles of the pilot study and the number of enrolled students.

Prior to data cleaning process, there were 415 participants. Five cases were deleted due to subjects' inconvenient characteristics for the aim of the study (1 case was not a student, 4 cases were not currently involved in a romantic relationship). Following this, data were controlled to see if the dataset has outlier scores, and 24 cases were identified as multivariate outliers due to their Mahalonobis distance scores. Nevertheless, the researcher created two types of data set: one with outliers and one without outliers. Since the results of the analyses did not change significantly, the dataset including outliers was used for further analyses. Consequently, 411 participants that consisted of 226 women (55%) and 185 men (45%) aged between 18 and 26 ( $M = 21.22$   $SD = 1.71$ ) remained for the analyses. Moreover, majority of the participants ( $n = 316$ ; 76.9%) indicated that their relationship types is serious. The mean of the duration of relationship was 25.71 months ( $SD = 2.0$ ). Participants' demographic characteristics are presented in Table 3.

Table 2

*Faculties of the Participants*

Faculty	Pilot Study (N = 411)		Number of Enrolled Students (N = 9.391)	
	f	%	f	%
Engineering	77	18,7	1843	19.62
Islamic Sciences	25	6,1	682	7.26
Economics and Administrative Sciences	100	24,3	2386	25.40
Physical Education and Sport	48	11,7	1163	12.38
Forestry	18	4,4	343	3.65
Science	24	5,8	382	3.64
Literature	69	16,8	1432	15.20
Education	50	12,2	1160	12.35

*Note.* The numbers of enrolled students are retrieved from the study university Undergraduate Students' Statistics in 2016

Table 3

*Demographic Characteristics of the RDS Study Participants (N = 411)*

Variables	f	%
Gender		
Female	227	55.2
Male	184	44.8
Relationship Type		
Dating	64	15,6
Serious relationship	316	76,9
Engaged	27	6,6
Married	4	1,0

### **3.3.1.3 The Validity and Reliability of the Turkish RDS**

A psychological test should have some important features to get more realistic results while describing data. One of them is validity which means that to what extent an instrument measures its predetermined theme. In the pilot study, the validity evidence of the RDS was obtained in two steps. First, to test the three-factor model of the RDS, Confirmatory Factor Analysis was conducted to gain evidence of construct validity. In the second place, concurrent validity a type of criterion validity was obtained through testing correlations between scales with similar intents.

Another important feature is reliability which refers to an instrument shows consistent results not depending on the conditions. In the pilot study, the internal consistency was used as an evidence of reliability by computing Cronbach Alpha correlation coefficient scores for the subscales.

#### **3.3.1.3.1 Construct Validity of the RDS**

As it is highlighted in the literature, performing Confirmatory Factor Analysis without Explanatory Factor Analysis is sufficient in scale adaptation studies for gathering construct validity since they were testing the already hypothesized models in the theory (Çokluk, Şekercioğlu, & Büyüköztürk, 2010). Before conducting CFA to ensure the construct validity of the RDS, assumptions of confirmatory factor analysis were checked and presented below.

##### **3.3.1.3.1.1 Assumption Checks of the Data for the Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the RDS**

The appropriateness of the data for the confirmatory factor analysis were ensured by controlling for the accuracy of data, sample size, missing values, outliers, normality, linearity and multicollinearity assumptions.

Firstly, accuracy of the data was evaluated in terms of possible mistakes while entering the data. For this purpose, maximum and minimum values were controlled and it was seen that three of the cases were entered wrongly. For instance, the

researcher had entered 33 instead of 3. Then, these cases were compared with the participants' original responses and changed with them.

There are different criteria for to evaluate whether the sample size was sufficient for the CFA. A general useful rule of thumb regarding sample size is the ratio of cases to free parameters of 20:1 or 10:1 based on the complexity of the model (Jackson, 2003). For the present study, there were 27 free parameters (12 for factor loadings, 12 for error variances, and 3 for correlations between latent variables) which indicate a minimum sample size for this study is 270. When the simplicity of the present model was taken into account, the ratio of 10:1 was accepted as a criterion and sample size was enough for the analysis based on this rule ( $479 > 270$ ). Moreover Kline (2011) indicated that any sample size above 200 was adequate for SEM studies. Consequently, the sample size of the present study was appropriate for the analyses.

Another assumption of CFA was about missing values. After performing missing value analysis for each factors, there were some cases with missing values and results of Little's MCAR test was not significant showing that missing values were distributed randomly indicating data imputation was feasible for the pilot study. Besides, missing values were less than 5% for each case. Therefore, data imputed with EM algorithm method.

Outliers were controlled after data imputation. Initially, univariate outliers were examined using z-scores of the variables. There were few cases that violate this assumption since the z-scores of them were above  $\pm 3.29$  (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Before interpreting results, Mahalanobis distances were generated to see the multivariate outliers. The critical  $\chi^2$  value was 32.909 for  $df = 12$ ,  $p < .001$  (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007), and 24 cases were defined due to their Mahalanobis distance scores. The researcher created two types of data set in the meantime: one with outliers and one without outliers. Since the results of the analyses did not change significantly, data set including outliers was used for further analyses.

Linearity assumption was controlled through a visual check of bivariate scatterplots, a straight line between two variables. For this purpose, a random data set among items were tested and results demonstrated the linearity assumption was met.

Multivariate normality assumption was examined using Mardia's (1970) coefficient with Multivariate Kurtosis. It is expected to find coefficients lower than 5 to meet multivariate normality (Bentler, 2005; as cited in Byrne, 2010). In the present study, the Mardia's coefficient was 85.080 indicating multivariate normality assumption was violated. As a remedy for this violation, Bootstrapping procedure, highly recommended solution for non-normality, was performed (Byrne, 2010).

Finally, multicollinearity assumption was tested by examining the bivariate correlations among items. Results yielded that multicollinearity assumption was met since there was not any correlation higher than .90 (Field, 2009).

#### **3.3.1.3.1.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the RDS**

Following assumption checking, confirmatory factor analysis was carried out to examine the factor structure of the RDS using AMOS version 21.0 software (Arbuckle, 2012). To make a decision about the results of the proposed model, several fit indices can be used in Confirmatory Factor Analysis. In the present study, Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) as well as  $\chi^2$  and  $\chi^2/df$  ratio. As criteria for fit statistics, following cut off values were used: CFI .90 or higher, TLI .90 or higher, GFI .90 or higher, RMSEA .08 or lower, SRMR .08 or lower, and chi-square/df ratio 5 or lower (Schumacker & Lomax, 1996; 2004; MacCallum et al., 1996).

Since the sample violated normality, bootstrapping was applied before running the CFA analysis. Results yielded acceptable goodness of fit statistics for three-factor model of RDS ( $\chi^2 / df = 3,86$ ; GFI = .93; CFI = .94; TLI = .93; RMSEA = .076 and SRMR = .039). Factor structure of the RDS was given in Figure 2.

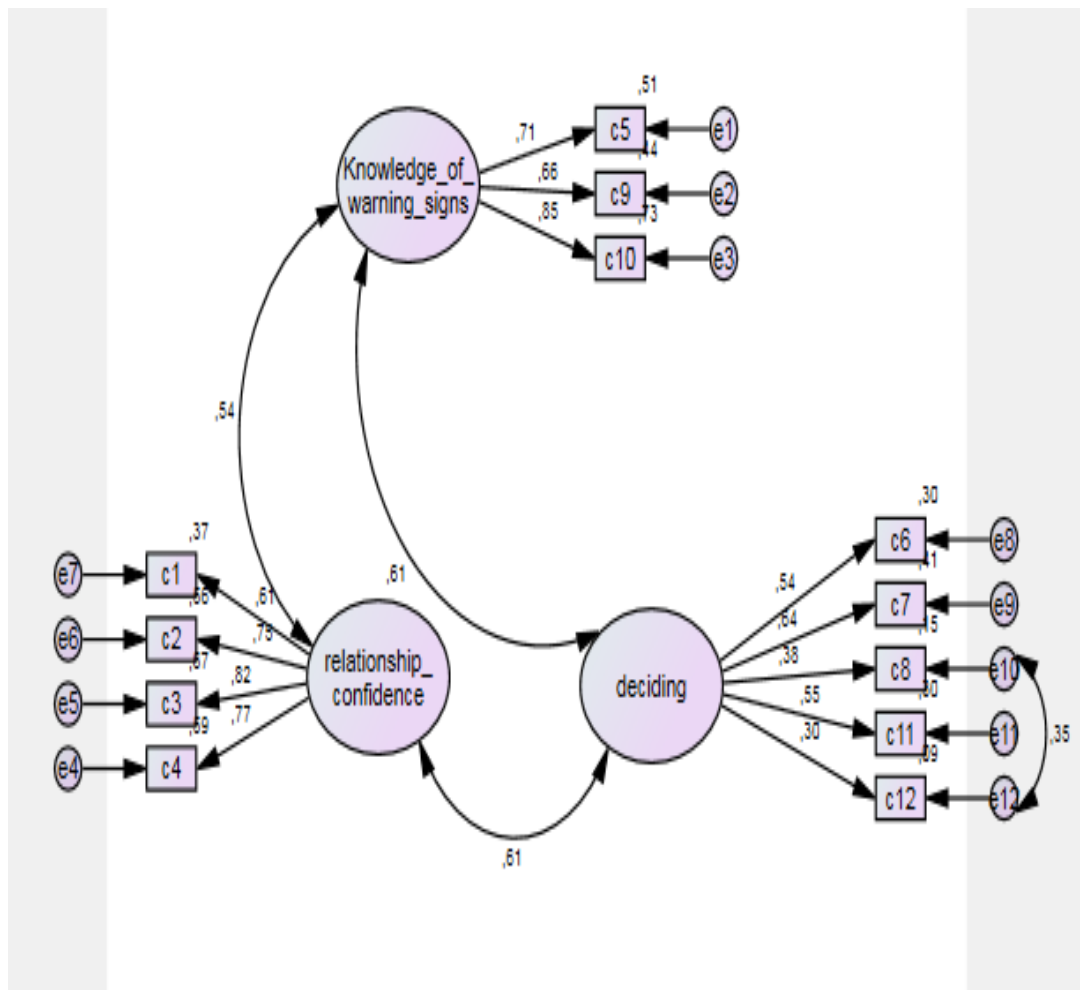


Figure 2 Estimates of parameters of confirmatory factor analysis for Relationship Deciding Scale – Pilot Study

Moreover, as it can be seen from Table 4, standardized factor loadings of items were changing from .30 to .85 indicating acceptable results since they met the cut off value .30 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Table 4

*Standardized Regression Weights and Squared Multiple Correlations of Relationship Deciding Scale*

Construct	Item	Standardized Factor Loadings	<i>t</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>
Relationship Confidence	c1	.61	11.71***	.37
	c2	.75	14.55***	.57
	c3	.82	15.66***	.68
	c4	.77		.59
	c5	.72		.51
Knowledge of Warning Signs	c9	.66	11.85***	.44
	c10	.85	13.35***	.73
	c6	.54		.30
Deciding	c7	.64	7.90***	.41
	c8	.38	5.76***	.15
	c11	.55	7.35***	.30
	c12	.30	4.66***	.09

Note. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ , c =item.

### 3.3.1.3.2 Criterion and Discriminant Validity of the RDS

For criterion and discriminant validity, relations between the RDS subscales with related scales were evaluated. Specifically, conflict management, relationship efficacy, negotiation, psychological aggression, and self-control were used for concurrent validity- a type of criterion validity while social desirability was used for discriminant validity. The correlations between RDS subscales and the related scales of aforementioned variables were explained below as well as with the data collection instruments information.

*Conflict Management Scale.* The conflict management scale is a sub-dimension of Interpersonal Competence Questionnaire developed by Buhrmester, Furman, Wittenberg and Reis (1988), and consists of 5 items with a 5-point Likert type scale. The adaptation of the scale to Turkish was made by Şahin and Gizir (2013), and



Cronbach alpha coefficients of the scale were reported as .83 and .80 for adaptation and present studies, respectively.

*Relational Esteem Scale.* This scale is a sub-dimension of Multidimensional Relationship Questionnaire developed by Snell, Schicke and Arbeiter (2002) to measure one's efficacy beliefs towards relationship. It has 5 items with a 5 point Likert type and adapted to Turkish by Büyükşahin (2005). Cronbach alpha coefficients for the adaptation and present study were found as .81 and .91, respectively.

*Psychological Aggression Scale.* This scale is a sub-dimension of the The Revised Conflict Tactics Scale developed by Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, and Sugarman in 1972 and revised in 1996. The Turkish version of the scale was adapted by Aba and Kulakaç (2016). It consists of 16 items with .85 Cronbach alpha coefficients. For the present study, Cronbach alpha coefficient of the scale was .83.

*Brief Self-Control Scale.* The Turkish version of the Brief Self-Control Scale which was developed by Tangney, Baumeister and Boone (2004) was adapted to Turkish by Nebioğlu, Konuk, Akbaba, and Eroğlu (2012). It produces two sub-dimensions named as impulsivity and self-discipline as well as with a total score of self-control. The Turkish version of the scale has 9 items with a 5-point Likert type scale. In the present study, Cronbach alpha coefficient was found .70.

*Negotiation Scale.* This scale is a sub-dimension of the The Revised Conflict Tactics Scale developed by Straus et al., in 1972 and revised in 1996. The Turkish version of the scale was adapted by Aba and Kulakaç (2016). The scale consists of 12 items, and the Cronbach alpha coefficient for negotiation subscale was .88. In the present study, Cronbach alpha coefficient was .79.

*Social Desirability Scale.* The Short Form of Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale was developed by Marlowe and Crowne (1960, 1964; as cited in Ural & Ozbirecikli, 2006) and adapted to Turkish by Ural and Ozbirecikli (2006) to assess individuals' need for social approval. The scale has 7 items with .78 and .58 Cronbach alpha coefficients for the adaptation and present study, respectively.

Before obtaining validity evidence, descriptive statistics and correlations among RDS subscales were calculated and shown in Table 5.

Table 5

*Means, Standard Deviations and Correlations among Factors for Turkish RDS*

Factor	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3
1. Relationship Confidence	17.88	2.76	-	.46**	.40**
2. Knowledge of Warning Signs	12.00	2.62		-	.40**
3. Deciding	20.62	3.36			-

*Note.* \*\* $p < .01$ , two tailed.

Among the variables to use in validity evidence, relationship efficacy, self-control and psychological aggression were used for the convergent validity in the first place, then other variables included as in the original study. Relationship efficacy was positively correlated with all subscales (Knowledge of Warning Signs,  $r = .36$ ; Deciding,  $r = .17$ ) and mostly with Relationship Confidence ( $r = .45$ ) as expected. Self-control was also expected to correlate with RDS subscales positively and mostly with deciding scale. However, self-control was mostly related with relationship confidence ( $r = .31$ ) instead of deciding ( $r = .27$ ) not consistent with the original study. Even so, the level of deciding was still higher than the original one ( $r = .25$ ). Psychological aggression was used to assess the correlation of the RDS Subscales specifically for Knowledge of Warning Signs due to the lack of the certain instrument. The relationship between psychological aggression and RDS subscales were negative as predicted (Relationship confidence,  $r = -.25$ , Knowledge of Warning Signs,  $r = -.13$ ; Deciding,  $r = -.16$ ), yet the strongest relationship between variables was not as expected. The results of the correlations were given in Table 6 in detail.

Table 6

*Correlations for the Relationship Deciding Scale Subscales of the Original and Pilot Studies*  
( $N = 411$ )

Variable	Original Study			Pilot Study		
	Relationship Confidence	Knowledge of Warning Signs	Deciding	Relationship Confidence	Knowledge of Warning Signs	Deciding
Self-control	.20**	.23**	.25**	.31**	.25**	.27**
Relationship Efficacy	.42**	.36**	.24**	.45**	.36**	.17**
Psychological Aggression	-.27**	-.27**	-.11*	-.25**	-.13**	-.16**
Conflict Management	.35**	.33**	.26**	.35**	.29**	.09
Negotiation	-.09*	-.04	.04	-.03	-.06	-.08
Social Desirability	.03	.11*	.05	.25**	.27**	.18**

Note. \*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

Table 6 provides a comparison of the concurrent validity scores of present study and the original study of the RDS (Vennum & Fincham, 2011). As a general rule, the higher scores of the validity coefficient indicate more acceptable results as an evidence for validity. As it was expected, the results of present study were almost consistent with the original one in terms of the level of the correlation and the direction of it. For instance, negotiation was not a useful tool for concurrent validity both in the original and present study.

Discriminant validity of the RDS was obtained through correlations between social desirability scale and the RDS subscales. The weak relationships between social desirability and Relationship Confidence ( $r = .25$ ), Knowledge of Warning Signs ( $r$

=.27) and Deciding ( $r = .18$ ) were acceptable evidence of discriminant validity of RDS.

### **3.3.1.3.3 The Reliability of the RDS**

In order to evaluate internal consistency of Relationship Confidence, Knowledge of Warning Signs and Deciding subscales of the RDS, Cronbach alpha coefficients were calculated and found as .82, .77 and .63, respectively. Considering the general guidelines for reliability scores, the Cronbach alpha coefficients of Relationship Confidence and Knowledge of Warning Signs subscales were yielded adequate results since they were above .70 whereas Cronbach alpha coefficient of Deciding subscale was below that criterion. However, Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) indicated that the scores between .60 and .70 were also applicable.

To sum up, after performing several analyses, the RDS was proved as a valid and reliable measure to use in Turkish culture.

### **3.3.1.4 The Measurement Model of the RDS for the Main Study**

Before giving the information about the validity and reliability studies of the RDS, it should be noted that only relationship confidence and knowledge of warning signs subscales were used in the present study since the aims of the study were limited with these variables because of internal consistency of deciding subscale was below .60 which indicates low internal consistency among items. Therefore, relationship confidence and knowledge of warning signs subscales were analyzed separately throughout the further analyses.

In order to obtain validity and reliability evidence of the relationship confidence and knowledge of warning signs scales for the present study, confirmatory factor analyses and Cronbach Alpha coefficient were performed respectively.

#### **3.3.1.4.1 The Validity and Reliability of the Relationship Confidence Scale for the Main Study**

Validity evidence of the relationship confidence subscale was obtained by confirmatory factor analysis (see Figure 3). Results of goodness of fit statistics

yielded perfect fit to the present data ( $\chi^2 / df = .50$ ; GFI = .99; CFI = 1.00; NFI = .99; TLI = 1.00; RMSEA = .000 and SRMR = .005).

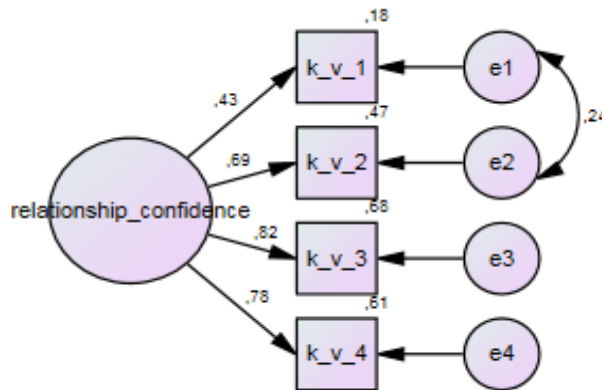


Figure 3. Estimates of parameters of confirmatory factor analysis for Relationship Confidence Scale

Moreover, as it can be seen from Table 7, standardized factor loadings of items were changing from .43 to .82 indicating acceptable results since they were above cut off value .30 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Table 7

Standardized Regression Weights and Squared Multiple Correlations of Relationship Confidence Scale

Construct	Item	Standardized Factor Loadings	<i>t</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>
Relationship Confidence	k_v_1	.43		.18
	k_v_2	.69	9.03***	.47
	k_v_3	.82	8.32***	.68
	k_v_4	.78	8.32***	.61

Note. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

Internal consistency of Relationship Confidence scale was assessed by computing Cronbach alpha coefficient and found as .78 which indicates adequate internal consistency among items (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

As a conclusion, Relationship Confidence subscale of the RDS was a valid and reliable measure for the current study.

### 3.3.1.4.2 The Validity and Reliability of the Knowledge of Warning Signs Scale for the Main Study

In order to ensure validity of the knowledge of warning signs subscale, confirmatory factor analysis was performed (see Figure 4). Results of goodness of fit statistics yielded acceptable fit to the present data ( $\chi^2 / df = 2,73$ ; GFI = .99; CFI = .99; NFI = .99; TLI = .98 RMSEA = .060 and SRMR = .015).

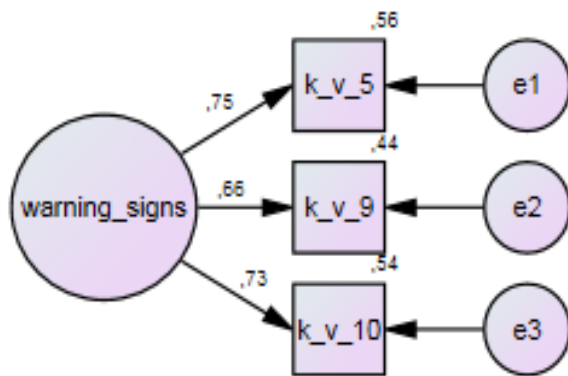


Figure 4. Estimates of parameters of confirmatory factor analysis for Knowledge of Warning Signs Scale

Moreover, as it can be seen from Table 8, standardized factor loadings of items were changing from .66 to .75 indicating acceptable results since they were above cut off value .30 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

In terms of internal consistency of knowledge of warning signs scale, Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated and found as .76 which indicates adequate internal consistency among items (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Table 8

*Standardized Regression Weights and Squared Multiple Correlations of Knowledge of Warning Signs Scale*

Construct	Item	Standardized Factor Loadings	<i>t</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>
Knowledge of Warning Signs	k_v_5	.75		.54
	k_v_9	.66	12.91***	.44
	k_v_10	.73		.68

Note. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

As a conclusion, Knowledge of Warning Signs subscale of the RDS was a valid and reliable measure for the current study.

### 3.3.2 Relationship Beliefs Questionnaire (RBQ)

The Relationship Beliefs Questionnaire which was developed by (Debord et al., 1996) measures individuals' beliefs and behaviors towards romantic relationships. It has 9 factors and 71 items with a 6-point Likert type rating scale, where 1 indicates "strongly disagree" and 6 indicates "strongly agree". These factors are named as "We should be completely open and honest with each other at all times", "We should be able to read each other's minds", "We should do everything together", "We should be able to meet all of each other's needs", "We should be willing and able to change for each other", "Things should always be perfect between us", "Good relationships should be easy to maintain", "One can never be complete without being involved in a romantic relationship" and "Romantic idealism".

In the RBQ, there is no reverse item and total scores of RBQ change from 71 to 426. Higher scores indicate more presence of dysfunctional relationship beliefs. The internal consistency coefficients of RBQ were assessed with Cronbach Alpha coefficient, which was between .61 and .91 for factors, and .95 for total score.

The RBQ was adapted to Turkish by Gizir (2012) and Turkish form of RBQ has 37 items with 6 factors namely, "We should be completely open and honest with each

other”, “We should be able to read each other’s minds”, “We should do everything together”, “We should be willing and able to change for each other” and “Romantic idealism”. Five-point Likert type rating was employed in the adaptation process and total scores of RBQ changes from 37 to 185 with factor loadings ranging from .55 to .85. Like in the original form, higher scores indicate more presence of dysfunctional relationship beliefs. The internal consistency coefficients of 37 item RBQ were assessed with Cronbach Alpha coefficient which was between .78 and .89 for factors and .95 for total score. After performing second order confirmatory factor analysis Gizir (2012) also reported that the RBQ can be used with total score as if it is unidimensional which called Irrational Relationship Beliefs,  $\chi^2/df = 1.91$ ; GFI= .92; CFI = .96; RMSEA= .036, and SRMR= .036. As a result of the adaptation study, it was concluded that the RBQ was valid and reliable scale in Turkish college student population. In the present study, unidimensional model of the RBQ was employed.

### **3.3.2.1 The Validity and Reliability of the RBQ for the Main Study**

In order to obtain construct validity evidence of the RBQ for the present study, First Order and Second Order Confirmatory Factor Analyses were conducted. To be sure about reliability, internal consistency of the scale was used as evidence and it was measured with Cronbach Alpha coefficient.

Preliminarily, first order confirmatory factor analysis was performed to test whether the six factor model fit to the data. As a result of the first order confirmatory factor analysis, factor loadings of items yielded between .45 and .76 which were in acceptable ranges since they were above the cut off value .30. Moreover, the results of the hypothesized six-factor model yielded acceptable fit to the data ( $\chi^2 / df = 2,86$ ; GFI = .83; CFI = .88; TLI = .85 RMSEA = .062; SRMR = .06).

Moreover, reliability of the RBQ factors were obtained with testing Cronbach alpha coefficients and result yielded that they were all in acceptable range since they were above cut off value .70 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Specifically, Cronbach alpha coefficients for the factors were as follows: .85 for “We should be completely open and honest with each other” (Factor 1), .85 for “We should be able to read each



other's minds" (Factor 2), .86 for "We should do everything together" (Factor 3), .85 for "We should be able to meet all of each other's needs" (Factor 4), .77 for "We should be willing and able to change for each other" (Factor 5), and .74 for "Romantic idealism" (Factor 6).

In the present study, the uni-dimensional model of the scale was used and as a result of this choice the need for performing a second order confirmatory factor analysis was emerged. As it can be seen from Table 9, factor loadings of the RBQ changed between .78 and .93, which are in acceptable values (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Table 9

*Standardized Regression Weights and Squared Multiple Correlations of Relationship Beliefs Questionnaire*

Construct	Item	Standardized Factor Loadings	<i>t</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>
Irrational Relationship Beliefs	Factor 1	.80		.63
	Factor 2	.85	9.70***	.72
	Factor 3	.86	9.39***	.73
	Factor 4	.93	9.20***	.87
	Factor 5	.78	8.06***	.60
	Factor 6	.88	8.99***	.78

*Note.* \*\*\* *p* < .001.

According to the results, the uni-dimensional model of the RBQ was consistent with the data on an acceptable level ( $\chi^2/df = 2,91$ , GFI = .82; CFI = .86; TLI = .85 RMSEA = .063; SRMR = .063). In other words, all of six factors of the RBQ were loaded on one factor called as Irrational Relationship Beliefs. The Cronbach Alpha coefficients was .95 for the total scale (see Figure 5).

As a result, it was proved that the RBQ was valid and reliable measure for the current study.

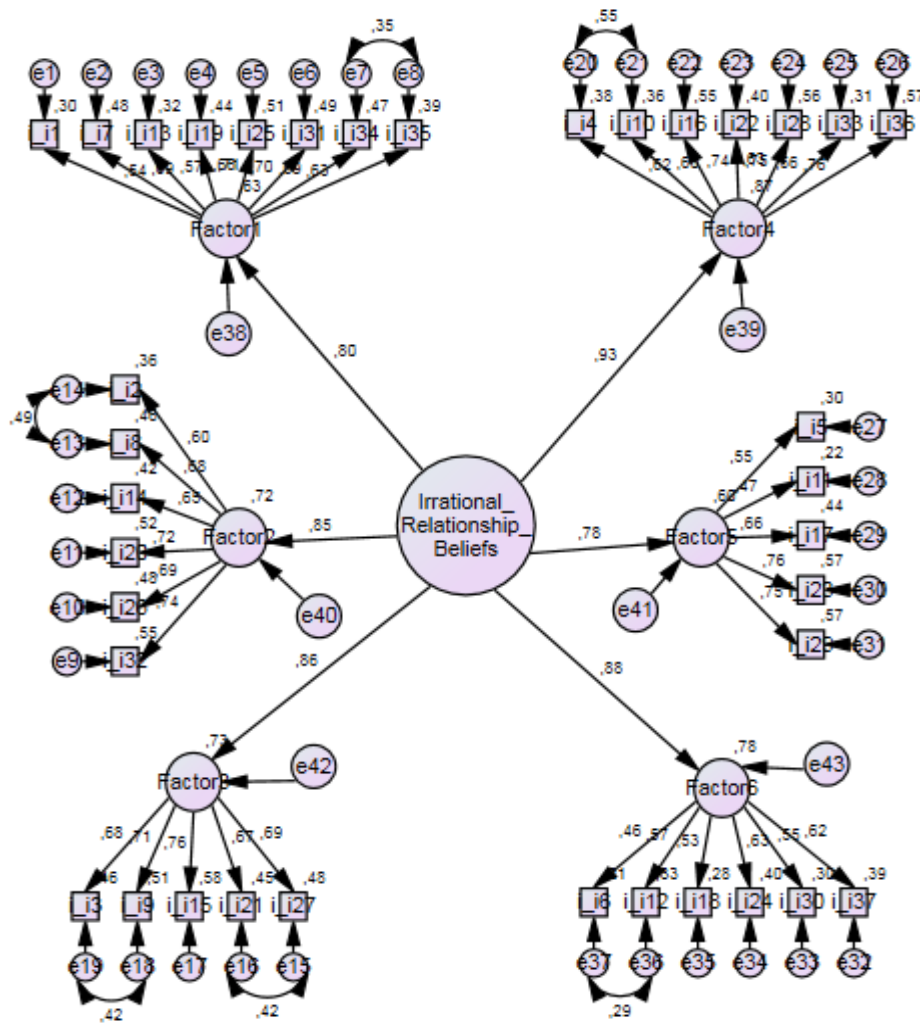


Figure 5. Estimates of parameters of second order confirmatory factor analysis for Relationship Beliefs Questionnaire

**3.3.3 Investment Model Scale (IMS)**

Rusbult et al. (1998) was developed the IMS to assess the Investment Model variables which are predictors of the persistence in a relationship. IMS is a self-report measure and consists of 37 items with four subscales (satisfaction, alternatives, investments, commitment). In the IMS, two types of items were used: facet items and global items. Facet items were designed to provide participants preparedness to the global items and they were responded to in a 4 point Likert type scale. On the other hand, global items were designed with 9-point Likert type scale where 1 indicates “do not agree at all” while 9 indicates “agree completely”. In IMS, commitment subscale has 7 items (without facet items) where satisfaction,

alternatives and investments subscales have 10 items (5 for facet items, 5 for global items) for each of them. In order to compute the scores of the subscales, mean scores of each subscale should be calculated by excluding facet items. In other words, only the mean score of global items of the subscales can be used in analyses. The reliability of the IMS was gathered using Cronbach alpha coefficient and internal consistency of the IMS was reported as good (commitment level  $\alpha=.91$  to  $.95$ , satisfaction level  $\alpha=.92$  to  $.95$ , quality of alternatives  $\alpha=.82$  to  $.88$ , and investment size  $\alpha=.82$  to  $.84$ ). Moreover as Le and Agnew (2003) stated that the validity and reliability evidence of the IMS was proved not only with relationship context but also with many samples including different participant groups (i.e., employees, students, etc.) and fields (organizational, medical, etc.).

Büyükşahin, Hasta, and Hovardaoğlu (2005) adapted the IMS to Turkish with 325 university students who were involved in a romantic relationship. As a result of the confirmatory and explanatory factor analyses, it was proved that IMS was valid in Turkish culture since items grouped like in its original form with acceptable factor loadings. In terms of reliability, Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient was used for each subscale of IMS. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for the subscales indicated good internal consistency (satisfaction level =  $.90$ , quality of alternatives =  $.84$ , and investment size  $.84$ ). In Turkish form of the IMS, like its original, only global items were included to the evaluation process which ranging from 1: "disagree completely" to 9: "agree completely". As the mean score of each subscale increases, the presence of the IMS variables increases too.

In another study conducted by Büyükşahin and Taluy (2008; as cited in Taluy, 2013) commitment subscale of the IMS was added to the scale after translation processes. As far as the available literature, there was not a published study about the psychometric properties of the subscale. However, the validity and reliability evidence of the commitment subscale were proved with other studies including married (Dedekorkut, 2015) and dating individuals (Toplu Demirtaş et al., 2013). In these studies, Cronbach alpha level was found as  $.87$  and  $.93$ , respectively.

### 3.3.3.1 The Validity and Reliability of the IMS for the Main Study

Before giving the information about the validity and reliability studies of the IMS, it should be noted that only satisfaction and commitment subscales were used in the present study since the aim of the study is limited with these variables. Therefore, satisfaction and commitment subscales were analyzed separately through these studies.

In order to obtain validity evidences of the satisfaction and commitment subscales for the present study, Confirmatory Factor Analyses were conducted. To ensure reliability, Cronbach Alpha coefficient was computed.

### 3.3.3.2 The Validity and Reliability of the Satisfaction Scale for the Main Study

Construct validity of the satisfaction subscale was obtained after performing confirmatory factor analysis (see Figure 6). Results showed that satisfaction subscale was valid to use for the present study ( $\chi^2 / df = 2,87$ ; GFI = .99; CFI = .99; TLI = .98; NFI = .99; RMSEA = .063 and SRMR = .019).

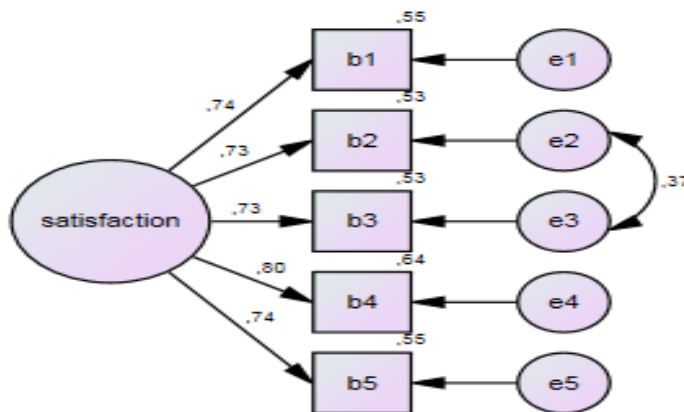


Figure 6. Estimates of parameters of confirmatory factor analysis for Satisfaction Scale

Furthermore, as it can be seen from Table 10, standardized factor loadings of items were yielded between .73 and .80, which were in acceptable ranges since they were above cut off value of .30 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Table 10

*Standardized Regression Weights and Squared Multiple Correlations of Satisfaction Scale*

Construct	Item	Standardized Factor Loadings	<i>t</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>
Satisfaction	Item 1	.740		.548
	Item 2	.728	14.573***	.531
	Item 3	.727	14.539***	.528
	Item 4	.798	15.970***	.637
	Item 5	.744	15.038***	.553

Note. \*\*\**p* < .001.

In order to evaluate internal consistency of Satisfaction scale, Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated and found as .87 which indicates high internal consistency among items (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

To conclude, Satisfaction subscale of the IMS was a valid and reliable measure for the current study.

### 3.3.4.3 The Validity and Reliability of the Commitment Scale for the Main Study

Validity evidence of the commitment subscale was gathered via confirmatory factor analysis (see Figure 7). According to results, goodness of fit statistics yielded acceptable fit to the present data ( $\chi^2 / df = 4,05$ ; GFI = .97; CFI = .98; TLI = .96; RMSEA = .080 and SRMR = .026).

Moreover, as it can be seen from Table 11, standardized factor loadings of items were changing from .31 to .89 indicating acceptable results since they were above cut off value of .30 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

Internal consistency of Commitment scale was assessed by calculating Cronbach alpha coefficient and found as .83, which indicates high internal consistency among items (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

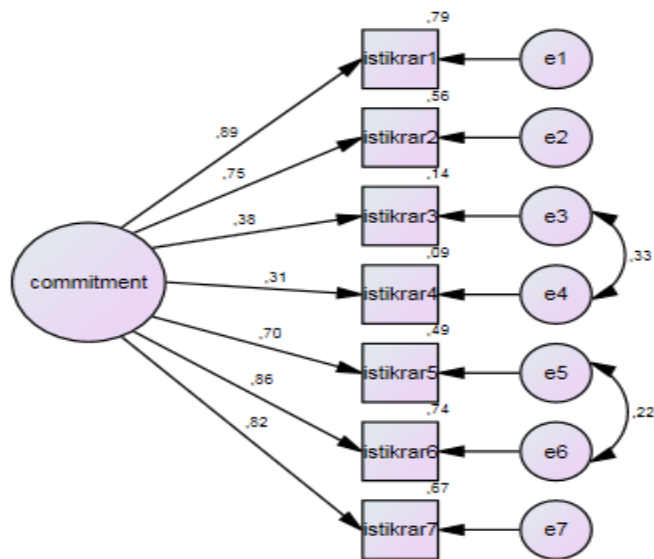


Figure 7. Estimates of parameters of confirmatory factor analysis for Commitment Scale

As a conclusion, Commitment subscale of the IMS was a valid and reliable measure for the current study.

Table 11

*Standardized Regression Weights and Squared Multiple Correlations of Commitment Scale*

Construct	Item	Standardized Factor Loadings	<i>t</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>
Commitment	Item 1	.889		.790
	Item 2	.747	19.667***	.558
	Item 3	.376	8.247***	.141
	Item 4	.307	6.629***	.094
	Item 5	.700	17.434***	.490
	Item 6	.859	24.563***	.737
	Item 7	.820	22.937***	.673

Note. \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

### **3.3.4 Demographic Information Form**

To get a better understanding of the participants' basic demographics and relationship characteristics, a demographic information form was developed by the researcher. In this form, participants indicated their gender, age, faculty, duration of relationship and the type of the relationship (dating, serious relationship and engaged) information. Moreover, to prevent inappropriate participation to the study which can be resulted from snowball sampling, relationship status information (I am involved in a romantic relationship currently/ I am not involved in a romantic relationship currently) was added as a control question to the study.

### **3.4 Data Collection Procedure**

In the present study, different procedures were utilized to collect data for pilot study and main study. Hence, they were explained in the following sections separately.

#### **3.4.1 Data Collection Procedure for the -RDS Study**

Before collecting data, the researcher applied for the ethical board permission from the Middle East Technical University Human Subjects Ethics Committee (see Appendix A) and data collection permission from the study university (see Appendix C). After granting the ethical approval, the data of the pilot study were collected from undergraduate students of the study university who were between 18-26 ages and involved in a heterosexual romantic relationship in 2016-2017 academic year spring semester. Data were collected in classroom settings at the end of the course time with the permission of the course instructors. The researcher asked the instructor to get permission for visiting the class at the last 30 minutes of the course time. The reason to choose this approach is derived from the sensitivity of romantic relationships in this age period and via this implementation participants were free to leave the class earlier. In the beginning of the data collection process, students were informed about the purpose and significance of the study. Then, students were asked to read and sign the informed consent forms which include detailed information about the study as well as contact information and right to give

up filling the scales at any time. Afterwards, volunteer students filled the survey packages approximately in 20-30 minutes.

### **3.4.2 Data Collection Procedure for the Main Study**

Data collection procedure for the main study, like in the pilot study, was started with obtaining ethical board permission from the Middle East Technical University Human Subjects Ethics Committee (see Appendix B) and data collection permission from the study university (see Appendix C). After granting the permissions from the universities, the data of the main study were collected from undergraduate students of the study university, who were between 18-26 years-old and involved in a heterosexual romantic relationship in the 2017-2018 academic year fall semester.

As a different data collection procedure from the pilot study, snowball sampling technique was included into the main study. The reason behind this implementation was resulted from the difficulty to reach the individuals who were in a romantic relationship at that time. As a result of it, participants were delivered the survey packages via their friends who were experienced the process directly and told about the important aspects of data collection process such as inclusion criteria of the study (age, relationship status and being an undergraduate student). Moreover, participants were also invited to the study in classroom settings which was mentioned in the previous section in detail. Participants completed the scales approximately in 20 -30 minutes.

### **3.5 Variables**

The variables examined in the present study were described and operationalized in this section. As noted earlier, the proposed model explores the relationships between irrational relationship beliefs, knowledge of warning signs, relationship confidence, satisfaction, and commitment among dating university students.

Variables were discussed with three categories; exogenous variables (irrational relationship beliefs), mediator variables (relationship confidence, knowledge of warning signs, and satisfaction), and endogenous variables (commitment). Exogenous variables and endogenous variables are same with independent and



dependent variables, respectively. Exogenous variables affect endogenous variables directly or indirectly through the mediator variables. For the current study, operational definitions of the variables were presented in Table 12.

Table 12

*Operational Definitions of the Variables*

Variable	Scale	Description	Range
<i>Exogenous Variable</i>			
Irrational Relationship Beliefs	RBQ	37 item, 5 point	Continuous; min-max = 37-185
<i>Mediator Variables</i>			
Relationship Confidence	RDS	4 item, 5 point	Continuous; min-max = 4-20
Knowledge of Warnings Signs	RDS	3 item, 5 point	Continuous; min-max = 3-15
Satisfaction	IMS	5 item, 9 point	Continuous; min-max = 1-9
<i>Endogenous Variable</i>			
Commitment	IMS	7 item, 9 point	Continuous; min-max = 1-9

The variables used in the study were listed below:

1. Exogenous Variable

*Irrational Relationship Beliefs* were measured by 37 item Relationship Beliefs Questionnaire (RBQ)

2. Mediator Variables

*Relationship Confidence* was measured by 4 item Relationship Confidence subscale of Relationship Deciding Scale (RDS).

*Knowledge of Warning Signs* was measured by 3 item Knowledge of Warning Signs subscale of Relationship Deciding Scale (RDS).

*Satisfaction* was measured by 5 item Satisfaction subscale of the Investment Model Scale (IMS)

### 3. Endogenous Variable

*Commitment* was measured by 7 items Commitment subscale of the Investment Model Scale (IMS)

#### 3.6 Data Analyses

Several analyses were performed to examine different purposes of the present study. IBM SPSS Statistics 22 software (IBM Corp., 2013), and Amos 21.0 software (Arbuckle, 2012) were utilized in these analyses.- Since the different data sets were used for pilot study and the main study, the following procedures were repeated for them.

Before the analyses, data cleaning procedure was carried out. Then, assumptions were checked to be sure about the accuracy of the data as well to give direction to the analyses while selecting methods. Following this, descriptive statistics were used to gain insight about the characteristics of the participants. After, confirmatory factor analyses were conducted to obtain construct validity of the data collection instruments. Next, multi-group measurement model was analyzed. Lastly, structural model was tested using structural equation modeling to examine the main research question of the study.

#### 3.7 Limitations of the Study

Like in other studies, this study has also several limitations and while interpreting the results they should be considered carefully.

Firstly, data collection instruments of the study were self-report measures which can cause several issues. To begin with, romantic relationships are private topics for participants; therefore, facing, accepting and expressing the feelings and thoughts regarding relationships can be difficult for some participants. Due to this fact, keeping important information about their relationships inside of themselves may threaten the results. The other limitation regarding self-report measures is emerged from the individuals' consciousness level of their feelings and thoughts. As Wilson

(1994) stated people can report only the thoughts and feelings they are aware of which leads a limitation to results (as cited in Berscheid &Regan, 2005).

Generalizability is also a limitation for the current study, because of the sampling method. Participants were selected from undergraduate students of a medium-sized university in West Black Sea Region by using non-random sampling methods. Therefore, the findings of the present study were limited with those students.

The result of the present study is pertinent with this specified time since this study is not a longitudinal study, possible changes in the variables can not be evaluated in future.

Finally, confounding variables may create a limitation for the current study. As an example for this issue, alternatives and investments variables, subscales of investment model scale were not included in the study. Therefore, excluding these variables could have an effect on results.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

In this chapter, results of the current study were presented in detail. Preliminary analyses were given in the first section. Then, it is followed by results of descriptive statistics and correlation analyses. Afterwards, measurement invariance results were demonstrated. Following this, structural model analyses were given. In the last section, summary of the results was presented.

#### 4.1 Preliminary Analyses

Before proceeding to the further analyses, data were controlled to ensure its appropriateness to use SEM. For this aim, data screening was applied firstly and then assumptions of SEM were checked.

To begin with, data were checked whether any mistaken entry was included or not. For this aim, minimum and maximum values, and demographic information questions were controlled. Following data screening process, the adequacy of the sample size was examined. In the literature, there are several criteria to evaluate the sufficiency of sample size and most of them were taken the ratio of free parameters as base such as at least 5:1 (Hair et al., 2006) or 10:1 and 20:1 (Kline, 2005). According to parameter summary of the structural model that was revealed in the model testing output, there are 14 free parameters indicating a minimum sample size is 70 for the hypothesized model of the present study. Another criterion for the sample size is set by Hoelter indicating a sample size >200 is sufficient for structural equation modeling analyses (1983 as cited in Byrne, 2010). Taken together of these explanations, it was concluded that sample size of the present study (479) was enough to continue.

After that, missing value analysis was performed to see if the distribution of them is random or not. Results showed that Little's MCAR test was not significant and missing values were not higher than 5% for each case, which in turn, leads to data imputation for the present study is applicable. Hence, EM algorithm method was applied to impute data.

To examine outliers, Mahalanobis distance values were checked by using IBM SPSS 22.0 program (IBM Corp., 2013). As Ullman (2013) stated that  $\chi^2$  value with  $p < .001$  for a case is more likely to be a potential outlier, multivariate outliers of the present study were determined considering this information and finally, 33 cases were defined as outlier. Then, the researcher created two types of data set: one with outliers and one without outliers to test the hypothesized model. Since the results of the analyses changed in terms of reaching the multivariate normality, data set excluding outliers was used.

Multivariate normality assumption which is a very important one for the SEM studies can be evaluated with several guidelines proposed by scholars. However, before proceeding multivariate normality, univariate normality still should be controlled in the first place. Therefore, present study began with univariate normality checks. To make a decision about this issue, both histograms and univariate kurtosis values with their critical ratios were calculated. As Kline (2005) stated that there is not an exact agreement on what extent the values should be far away from zero. However, West et al. (1995 as cited in Byrne, 2010) stated standardized kurtosis scores ( $\beta_2$ ) higher than 7 could be a signal for the nonnormality. Using this information as a base, it can be concluded that univariate normality assumption was met for the present study. Following this, multivariate normality was controlled with Mardia's (1970, 1974 as cited in Byrne, 2010) normalized estimate of multivariate. According to Bentler (2005), values lower than 5 were accepted as an evidence of multivariate normality. Based on this criterion, it seems there was a minor violation of multivariate normality assumption for the present study since the Mardia's multivariate kurtosis value was 6.277 with c.r. = 8.210. On the other hand, Schermelleh-Engel and Moosbrugger (2003 as cited in

Çelik & Yılmaz, 2016) indicated that if all of the variables are measured with interval scale and met the univariate normality assumption as well as with sample size larger than 400, it can be said that multivariate normality was satisfied and Maximum Likelihood estimation method is appropriate to use. Taken together, it was concluded that multivariate normality assumption of the present study was met.

Linearity assumption was provided through controlling bivariate scatterplots visually and results presented that the linearity assumption was met for the study.

Multicollinearity assumption was controlled by checking for the bivariate correlations among items. Results showed that there was not any correlation higher than .90 indicating multicollinearity assumption was satisfied (Field, 2009).

#### **4.2 Descriptive Statistics**

Before conducting the main analyses, descriptive statistics were performed. For this aim, means and standard deviations of the study variables were computed and presented in Table 13.

According to Table 13, one can interpret that the sample reported high level of commitment ( $M = 8.24$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ) and satisfaction ( $M = 7.87$ ,  $SD = 1.20$ ), nearly high level of relationship confidence ( $M = 17.59$ ,  $SD = 2.44$ ) and knowledge of warning signs ( $M = 12.21$ ,  $SD = 2.36$ ) and moderate level of irrational relationship beliefs ( $M = 141.53$ ,  $SD = 25.09$ ) compared to possible range scores.

In order to examine any possible effects of gender on commitment, the endogenous variable of the study, independent sample t-test was conducted and results yielded that gender was a significant variable for commitment [ $t(477) = 4,204$ ,  $p < .05$ ]. More specifically, female participants showed significantly higher level of commitment than male participants.

Table 13

*Means and Standard Deviations for the Study Variables*

Variables	Female (n = 305)		Male (n = 174)		Total (n =479)		Possible Range
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Irrational Relationship Beliefs	139.94	25.65	144.32	23.88	141.53	25.09	37-185
Knowledge of Warning Signs	12.22	2.39	12.20	2.33	12.21	2.36	3-15
Relationship Confidence	17.61	2.46	17.55	2.41	17.59	2.44	4-20
Satisfaction	7.91	1.19	7.80	1.22	7.87	1.20	1-9
Commitment	8.39	.97	7.97	1.21	8.24	1.08	1-9

### 4.3 Bivariate Correlations among Study Variables

Prior to test the hypothesized model, bivariate correlations among study variables were investigated. For this reason, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were obtained both for men and women separately. Results were presented in Table 14. The top and bottom half of the matrix referred to correlations of women and men, correspondingly.

According to Table 14, there are some prominent findings but before giving details, the baseline for interpretation should be given which is Cohen's guideline (1988). Accordingly, the correlations between .10 to .29, .30 to .49 and .50 to 1.00 are defined as small (weak), medium (moderate) and large (strong), respectively.

The first highlight of the correlation matrix is that all of the correlations among variables were significant and positive except the one between commitment and knowledge of warning signs for women ( $r = .06, p >.05$ ). Secondly, there are minor changes in the correlation matrix regarding the level of the correlation for females

and males. For instance, the correlation between irrational relationship belief and satisfaction was moderate for males ( $r = .39$ ) and weak for females ( $r = .24$ ); while the correlation between irrational relationship belief and relationship confidence was weak for males ( $r = .29$ ) and moderate for females ( $r = .36$ ). Thirdly, the strongest correlation among variables is between relationship satisfaction and commitment ( $r = .54$  for males;  $r = .50$  for females) which is parallel to the literature. Lastly, the relationship between relationship confidence and knowledge of warning signs is positive and strong for males ( $r = .54$ ) where it was positive but moderate for females ( $r = .49$ ).

Table 14  
*Correlation Matrix of the Variables*

<i>Variables</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1. Irrational Relationship Beliefs	-	.31**	.36**	.24**	.21**
2. Knowledge of Warning Signs	.37**	-	.49**	.30**	.06
3. Relationship Confidence	.29**	.54**	-	.41**	.29**
4. Relationship Satisfaction	.39**	.25**	.32**	-	.50**
5. Commitment	.22**	.16*	.27**	.54**	-

Note. \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*  $p < 0.05$  level (two-tailed). Intercorrelations for female participants ( $N = 305$ ) are presented above the diagonal, and intercorrelations for male participants ( $N = 174$ ) are presented below the diagonal

#### 4.4 Model Testing

This step is begun with the measurement model testing and continued with the structural model analysis. As it was mentioned in the previous sections, examining the gender effect on hypothesized model was one of the study aims. Thus, multi-group structural model analysis was planned to apply. For this aim, measurement



model and structural model (if it is necessary) should have been tested, respectively. Throughout the analyses, Maximum Likelihood estimation method was selected since the data met the multivariate normality assumption. IBM AMOS 21.0 program was used for the analyses.

#### **4.4.1 Measurement Invariance**

As previously mentioned, examining the gender differences (if any) on the hypothesized model was one of the study aims. For this purpose, multi-group measurement model testing should be implemented at first. As goodness of the fit statistics the following criteria and cut off values were used: Comparative Fit Index (CFI) ( $> .90$ ), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) ( $> .90$ ), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) ( $> .90$ ), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) ( $< .08$ ), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) ( $< .08$ ) as well as  $\chi^2/df$  ratio ( $< 5$ ).

Milfont and Fischer (2010) states that a researcher who wants to determine the measurement invariances may use the four common models respectively: configural, metric, scalar and error variance invariance. To evaluate the results obtained from the analysis, changes in CFI and TLI values ( $\Delta CFI$  and  $\Delta TLI$ ) are also offered to use. Specifically, to be sure about there was no difference across groups, the differences in CFI and TLI should be between  $-0.01$  and  $0.01$  (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002).

To test these models, a multi-group CFA was applied in the current study. In this analysis using four models, a researcher may see the difference across groups using some specific information like latent variables (configural variance), factor loading across the groups (metric invariance), intercepts of items (scalar invariance) and all factor loadings, intercepts and error variances (error variance invariance). Results are presented in Table 15.

As it can be seen from the table 15, the changes in CFI and TLI scores were smaller than  $.01$  which indicates the measurement invariance across women and men were met. In other words, the model did not vary regarding gender, which means that using a single-sample structural model testing will be enough.

Table 15

*The Results of Multi-Group Confirmatory Factor Analysis Test*

	$\chi^2$	<i>df</i>	$\chi^2/df$	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA (90% CI)	$\Delta$ CFI	$\Delta$ TLI
Configural Invariance	5823.93	2930	1.98	.791	.780	.075	.046 [-.044, -.047]		
Metric Invariance	5896.54	2981	1.97	.789	.782	.076	.045 [-.044, -.047]	.002	-.002
Scalar invariance	5931.31	2996	.198	.788	.782	.078	.045 [-.044, -.047]	.003	-.002
Error variance invariance	6170.21	3061	2.01	.775	.774	.078	.046 [-.044, -.048]	.01	.006

**4.4.2 Structural Model**

The hypothesized model which aims to see the direct and indirect associations among the irrational relationship beliefs, relationship confidence, knowledge of warning signs, relationship satisfaction, and their impact on commitment level of university students was tested with a single sample structural equation modeling since measurement and structural invariance were met. Results were evaluated using overall fit, parameter estimates, and squared multiple correlation coefficients.

The results of the model testings were presented in Table 16. As it can be seen from the table 16, the results yielded close fit to the data for the proposed model;  $\chi^2=1,45$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.228$ ,  $\chi^2/df=1.45$ , CFI=.99, GFI=.99, TLI=.99, RMSEA=.03 (90%CI .00, .13), SRMR=.01.

In order to figure out the amount of variance explained by the hypothesized model, the squared multiple correlations ( $R^2$ ) were evaluated. Table 17 includes the  $R^2$  values of mediator (relationship confidence, knowledge of warning signs, satisfaction) and endogenous (commitment) variables. According to results, irrational relationship beliefs account for 11% of the variance in knowledge of warning signs, 29% of the variance in relationship confidence, 18% of the variance in

satisfaction. The overall hypothesized model explained the 28% of the variance in commitment.

Table 16

*Summary of the Model Fit Statistics for the Models*

<i>Fit Statistics</i>	Model 1 (proposed model)	Model 2 (mediation test for relationship confidence)	Model 3 (mediation test for knowledge of warning signs)	Model 4 (mediation test for satisfaction)	Acceptable values	Close Fit Values
$\chi^2/df$	1.45	2.72	.53	2.65	$\leq 5$	$\leq 3$
<b>GFI</b>	.99	.99	.99	.99	$\geq .90$	$\geq .95$
<b>TLI</b>	.99	.96	1.00	.96	$\geq .90$	$\geq .95$
<b>CFI</b>	.99	.99	1.00	.99	$\geq .95$	$\geq .97$
<b>SRMR</b>	.01	.02	.01	.02	$\leq .08$	$\leq .05$
<b>RMSEA</b> (90% CI)	.03 [.00, .13]	.06 [.00, .15]	.00 [.00, .11]	.06 [.00, .15]	$\leq .08$	$\leq .05$
<b>p</b>	.23	.10	.47	.10	$<.05$	$<.05$

The tested model is presented in Figure 8.

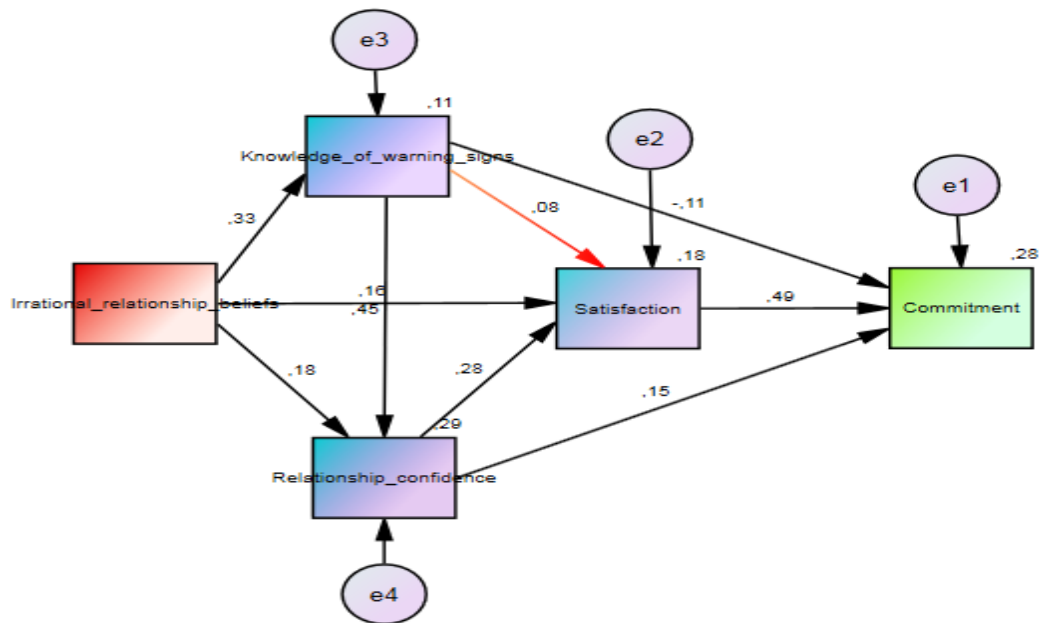


Figure 8. Tested model with standardized estimates, significant (black arrow) and nonsignificant (red arrow) paths

#### 4.4.3 Direct and Indirect Effects

In this part, the direct and indirect effects of the exogenous (irrational relationship beliefs), mediator (relationship confidence, knowledge of warning signs, satisfaction) and endogenous (commitment) variables were presented. Bootstrapping, a widely used method to test the significance of the effects was performed throughout this step (Bollen & Stine, 1990). Cohen's guideline (1988) was used while evaluating the beta coefficients. Accordingly, the correlations between .10 to .29, .30 to .49 and .50 to 1.00 are defined as small (weak), medium (moderate) and large (strong), respectively. The standardized direct, indirect and total effects for the proposed model were calculated with and without mediators and results were shown in Table 18).

Considering the direct effects, results showed that all of the paths were statistically significant, except for knowledge of warning signs to satisfaction ( $\beta = .08$ ,  $p > .05$ ). There was only one negative direct effect which is from knowledge of warning signs to commitment ( $\beta = -.11$ ). Regarding the direct effects of mediator variables on commitment, satisfaction had the largest effect ( $\beta = .49$ ) while knowledge of warning signs had the lowest effect ( $\beta = -.11$ ). This means that, individuals who are more satisfied in their relationships are committed to their relationships. Among relationship deciding variables, relationship confidence contributed more than knowledge of warning signs in predicting commitment. Speaking for the direct effects of irrational relationship belief on mediator variables, individuals who have more irrational relationship beliefs were more likely to be aware of warning signs in a relationship. Among the mediator variables, the direct effect from knowledge of warning signs to relationship confidence showed moderate effect ( $\beta = .45$ ) while the direct effect from knowledge of warning signs to satisfaction was not statistically significant.

The indirect effects of relationship deciding variables (knowledge of warning signs and relationship confidence) on commitment via satisfaction were significant too. More specifically, the indirect effect of knowledge of warning signs on commitment through satisfaction was significant and positive, ( $\beta = .10$ ) as well as the indirect

effect of relationship confidence on commitment through satisfaction was significant and positive, ( $\beta = .15$ ). In other words, dating university students who are more confident about maintaining a relationship and aware of warning signs in a relationship are more likely to feel satisfied which in turn commitment. The mediation role of satisfaction was partial for both knowledge of warning signs and relationship confidence. The indirect effect of knowledge of warning signs on satisfaction through relationship confidence was significant and positive ( $\beta = .13$ ). Relationship confidence fully mediates the effect of knowledge of warning signs on satisfaction since it changes the significance of the effect from significant to nonsignificant. In other words, knowledge of warnings signs relates the satisfaction via relationship confidence.

The indirect effects of irrational relationship beliefs on satisfaction were found as significant. To be more specific, the indirect effect of irrational relationship beliefs on satisfaction through knowledge of warning signs was significant and positive,  $\beta = .07$ ). Besides, the indirect effect of irrational relationship beliefs on satisfaction through relationship confidence was significant and positive, ( $\beta = .11$ ) too. The mediation effects were both partial.

The total effect is the sum of direct and indirect effects of all presumed pathways (Kline, 2005). In the present study, the endogenous variable was commitment and there was only one total effect on it: the total effect of irrational relationship belief on commitment was .15 ( $p < .05$ , small effect size).

#### **4.5 Hypothesis Testing**

Hypotheses presented in the introduction chapter were elaborated in following paragraphs.

*Hypothesis 1.* A statistically significant amount of variance in commitment is explained by the irrational relationship beliefs, knowledge of warning signs, relationship confidence and satisfaction among dating university students.

Regarding the hypothesis 1, following sub-hypotheses were created to examine the direct paths in Figure 1.

*Hypothesis 1.1.* There will be a significant negative relationship between irrational relationship beliefs and knowledge of warning signs variables (see Path A). Although the relationship was significant, the hypothesis was rejected since the relationship was positive,  $\beta = .33$ ,  $p < .05$ , [CI .24, .40].

*Hypothesis 1.2.* There will be a significant negative relationship between irrational relationship beliefs and relationship confidence variables (see Path B). Although the relationship was significant, the hypothesis was rejected since the relationship was positive,  $\beta = .18$ ,  $p < .05$ , [CI .11, .26].

*Hypothesis 1.3.* There will be a significant negative relationship between irrational relationship beliefs and satisfaction variables (see Path C). Although the relationship was significant, the hypothesis was rejected since the relationship was positive,  $\beta = .16$ ,  $p < .05$ , [CI .07, .24].

*Hypothesis 1.4.* There will be a significant positive relationship between knowledge of warning signs and commitment variables (see Path G). The hypothesis was rejected since the relationship was negative  $\beta = -.11$ ,  $p < .05$ , [CI -.20, -.02].

*Hypothesis 1.5.* There will be a significant positive relationship between relationship confidence and commitment variables (see Path H). The hypothesis was confirmed,  $\beta = .15$ ,  $p < .05$ , [CI .06, .25].

*Hypothesis 1.6.* There will be a significant positive relationship between satisfaction and commitment variables (see Path J). The hypothesis was confirmed,  $\beta = .49$ ,  $p < .05$ , [CI .38, .58].

*Hypothesis 1.7.* There will be a significant positive relationship between knowledge of warning signs and satisfaction variables (see Path D). This hypothesis was rejected,  $\beta = .08$ ,  $p > .05$ , [CI -.02, .19].

*Hypothesis 1.8.* There will be a significant positive relationship between relationship confidence and satisfaction variables (see Path E). The hypothesis was confirmed  $\beta = .28$ ,  $p < .05$ , [CI .19, .39].

*Hypothesis 1.9.* There will be a significant positive relationship between knowledge of warning signs and relationship confidence variables (see Path F). The hypothesis was confirmed,  $\beta = .45$ ,  $p < .05$ , [CI .37, .52].

*Hypothesis 2.* The relationship between RDS variables (knowledge of warning signs and relationship confidence) and commitment will be mediated through satisfaction.

Regarding the hypothesis 2, two sub-hypotheses were created:

*Hypothesis 2.1.* The relationship between knowledge of warning signs and commitment will be mediated through satisfaction. The hypothesis was confirmed. The indirect effect of knowledge of warning signs on commitment via satisfaction was significant and mediation was partial,  $\beta = .11$ ,  $p < .05$ , [CI .05, .17].

*Hypothesis 2.2.* The relationship between relationship confidence and commitment will be mediated through satisfaction. The hypothesis was accepted. The indirect effect of relationship confidence on commitment via satisfaction was significant. The mediation was partial,  $\beta = .15$ ,  $p < .05$ , [CI .11, .22].

*Hypothesis 3.* The relationship between irrational relationship beliefs and satisfaction will be mediated through RDS variables (knowledge of warning signs and relationship confidence).

Regarding the hypothesis 3, two sub-hypotheses were created:

*Hypothesis 3.1.* The relationship between irrational relationship beliefs and satisfaction will be mediated through knowledge of warning signs. The hypothesis was accepted. The mediation effect was significant and partial,  $\beta = .07$ ,  $p < .05$ , [CI .03, .11].

*Hypothesis 3.2.* The relationship between irrational relationship beliefs and satisfaction will be mediated through relationship confidence. The hypothesis was accepted. The mediation effect was significant and partial  $\beta = .11$ ,  $p < .05$ , [CI .07, .15].

*Hypothesis 4.* The relationship between knowledge of warning signs and satisfaction will be mediated through relationship confidence. The hypothesis was confirmed. The indirect effect of knowledge of warning signs on satisfaction via relationship confidence was significant and the relationship confidence fully mediates the relationship was significant and there was a full mediation ( $\beta = .13, p < .05$ ).

*Hypothesis 5.* RDS is valid and reliable measure to use in Turkish culture. This hypothesis was confirmed.

#### **4.6. Summary of the Results**

Results of the descriptive analyses demonstrated that sample reported high level of commitment and satisfaction; nearly high level of relationship confidence and knowledge of warning signs and moderate level of irrational relationship beliefs compared to possible range scores. Bivariate correlations among the variables were all significant and positive except the one between commitment and knowledge of warning signs for women. Contrary to the expectation, irrational relationship beliefs were found positively related with other variables.

Regarding the model testing process, effect of gender on commitment was checked at first. Gender was found as a significant factor on commitment, thus multi-group structural equation modeling was selected for further analyses. However, measurement model which is the first step of the analyses did not differ due to gender, so structural model testing was conducted with single sample. Measurement model results yield mediocre fit to the data where the structural model revealed good fit to the data. Among the variables, satisfaction was the strongest predictor of commitment. Moreover, relationship confidence fully mediates the relationship between knowledge of warning signs and satisfaction. Besides, the indirect effect of relationship confidence on commitment via satisfaction was significant and the mediation was partial. The overall tested model explained the 28% of the variance in commitment scores.



Table 17

*Standardized Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects for the Hypothesized Structural Model*

Path	Model 1 (Proposed model)			Model 2 (Mediation test for relationship confidence)			Model 3 (Mediation test for knowledge of warning signs)			Model 4 (Mediation test for satisfaction)		
	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	BC Interval	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	BC Interval	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	BC Interval	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	BC Interval
<b>Direct Effects</b>												
Irrational relationship beliefs → Commitment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.11	.02	(.03, .20)
Irrational relationship beliefs → Knowledge of warning signs	.33	.00	(.24, .40)	.33	.00	(.24, .40)	-	-	-	.33	.03	(.24, .40)
Irrational relationship beliefs → Relationship confidence	.18	.00	(.11, .26)	-	-	-	.33	.00	(.25, .41)	.18	.01	(.10, .25)
Irrational relationship beliefs → Satisfaction	.16	.00	(.07, .24)	.22	.00	(.13, .30)	.18	.00	(.10, .25)	-	-	-
Knowledge of warning signs → Relationship confidence	.45	.00	(.37, .52)	-	-	-	-	-	-	.45	.00	(.37, .53)
Knowledge of warning signs → Satisfaction	.08	.12	(-.02, .19)	.21	.00	(.11, .31)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Knowledge of warning signs → Commitment	-.11	.02	(-.20, .02)	-.05	.28	(-.14, .03)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Relationship confidence → Satisfaction	.28	.00	(.19, .39)	-	-	-	.32	.00	(.23, .42)	-	-	-
Relationship confidence → Commitment	.15	.00	(.06, .25)	-	-	-	.10	.00	(.01, .20)	.24	.01	(.14, .33)
Satisfaction → Commitment	.49	.00	(.38, .58)	.52	.00	(.43, .61)	.47	.00	(.37, .57)	-	-	-
<b>Indirect Effects</b>												
Irrational relationship beliefs → Commitment	.15	.00	(.10, .21)	.13	.00	(.08, .19)	.17	.00	(.12, .22)	.08	.01	(.04, .12)
Knowledge of warning signs → Satisfaction	-	-	-	.11	.00	(.05, .17)	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 17 (continued)

*Standardized Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects for the Hypothesized Structural Model*

	Model 1 (Proposed model)			Model 2 (Mediation test for relationship confidence)			Model 3 (Mediation test for knowledge of warning signs)			Model 4 (Mediation test for satisfaction)		
	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	BC Interval	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	BC Interval	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	BC Interval	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	BC Interval
Relationship confidence → Satisfaction → Commitment	-	-	-	-	-	-	.15	.00	(.11, .22)	-	-	-
Relationship confidence → Commitment	.14	.00	(.09, .21)	-	-	-	.15	.00	(.11, .22)	-	-	-
Knowledge of warning signs → Satisfaction	.13	.00	(.08, .19)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Knowledge of warning signs → Relationship confidence → Satisfaction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Knowledge of warning signs → Commitment	.17	.00	(.10, .24)	.11	.00	(.05, .17)	-	-	-	.11	.01	(.07, .15)
Knowledge of warning signs → Relationship confidence → Commitment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.11	.01	(.07, .15)
Irrational relationship beliefs → Satisfaction	.12	.00	(.08, .17)	.07	.00	(.03, .11)	.11	.01	(.07, .15)	-	-	-
Irrational relationship beliefs → Relationship Confidence	.15	.00	(.10, .19)	-	-	-	-	-	-	.15	.00	(.10, .20)
Irrational relationship beliefs → Knowledge of warning signs → Relationship confidence	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	.15	.00	(.10, .20)
Irrational relationship beliefs → Knowledge of warning signs → Satisfaction	-	-	-	.07	.00	(.03, .11)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Irrational relationship beliefs → Relationship confidence → Satisfaction	-	-	-	-	-	-	.11	.00	(.07, .15)	-	-	-
<b>Total Effects</b>												
Irrational relationship Beliefs → Commitment	.15	.00	(.10, .21)	.13	.00	(.08, .19)	.17	.00	(.12, .22)	.19	.00	(.12, .29)

*Note.* Reported BC intervals are the bias corrected 95% confidence interval of estimates resulting from bootstrap analysis

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

This chapter consists of three main sections. In the first section, the results of the present study with regard to related literature are discussed in detail. Then, implications for practice are discussed. Finally, recommendations for future studies are given.

#### **5.1. Discussion of the Findings**

The present study mainly aimed to explore how university students' irrational relationship beliefs, knowledge of warning signs, relationship confidence, and satisfaction levels relate to their commitment level in a model. Moreover, to test the sub-hypothesis, mediation analyses were also performed. For these purposes, structural equation model analyses were conducted, and the results of the study findings are discussed in the following sections.

##### **5.1.1 Discussion of the Direct Effects**

In order to examine the gender effect on the main research question-"how do university students' irrational relationship beliefs, knowledge of warning signs, relationship confidence, and satisfaction levels relate to their commitment level"-multi-group structural equation model analysis was applied. Since results showed measurement invariance, structural model testing was applied using a single sample model. Thus, results are discussed considering the single sample model findings.

Despite the significant gender effect on commitment in independent samples t-test analysis, the proposed model did not differ between the genders. This particular finding was parallel to the relevant literature. For instance, Bui, Peplau, and Hill,

1996) examined Rusbult's investment model in a meta-analysis study, and results showed that the associations among the variables did not differ according to gender. Moreover, in the hypothesized model, there was an interaction between variables, and this may affect the results in total. In other words, one can speculate that the results might be affected by the hypothesized model itself.

Additionally, satisfaction was the strongest predictor of the commitment both in the present study and in meta-analysis studies (Le & Agnew, 2003; Tran et al., 2019). The literature on satisfaction which yields similar results to the present study findings are a rich source of information in discussing this finding. For instance, studies not only conducted in Turkey (Beştav, 2007; Çürükvelioğlu, 2012; Aslan-Yılmaz, 2019) but also in other countries (Wongpakaran et al., 2012; Le & Agnew, 2003) indicated that gender was not a significant variable of satisfaction. Keeping in mind similar findings from different studies, it can be concluded that satisfaction seems a robust variable among the components of the commitment. From this perspective, finding satisfaction as the strongest predictor in the present study is not surprising.

According to the results, irrational relationship beliefs, knowledge of warning signs, relationship confidence, and satisfaction explained 28% of the variance in commitment. Regarding the predictive power of the variables, it can be said that there are still unknown parts to explain commitment. This particular finding cannot be directly compared with the literature since no study used these variables in a model. However, Öztekin's (2015) study that was conducted in the same culture helps in evaluating the results. In this study, the mediating role of the relationship beliefs between the attachment styles and commitment were investigated, and 47% of the variance in commitment was explained with these variables. When examining the predictor roles of each variable in Öztekin's study, it was obvious that attachment styles contributed a considerable amount (22%) to the commitment. In other words, if attachment styles were excluded in that study, the predictive power of the variables would probably decrease, which is parallel to the present study

finding. Concerning this information mentioned above, the explanatory power of the present study is meaningful in the absence of an attachment styles variable.

In the present study, irrational relationship beliefs were positively associated with commitment as well as with the mediator variables. When the literature was evaluated, this finding was not expected. There are alternative explanations for this situation.

First of all, this finding might be discussed under the measurement effect. In the present study, the irrational relationship beliefs of participants were measured with the Relationship Beliefs Questionnaire. Although RBQ met the psychometric criteria very well, finding a positive relationship among the variables was an unexpected case for scholars who work in this area. A possible explanation for this result could be related to the items, which are all positive. For instance, positively worded items such as "My partner should share all thoughts and feelings with me" or "My partner should be open and honest with me at all times" are more likely to create such a situation, where it becomes easier to get higher scores in RBQ. Besides, in the present study, RBQ was applied to the participants in a 5-point Likert type scale where the original was designed in 6-point Likert type scale. Applying a 5-point Likert type scale may affect the mean scores of the participants positively. For instance, a person can reply to the same items in the instrument by choosing "4" in a 5-point Likert type scale instead of "3" in a 6-point Likert type scale. Hence, it can be interpreted that the characteristics of the RBQ such as including positively worded items and rating the answers on a 5-point Likert type scale rather than 6-point Likert type scale made possible getting higher scores on irrational relationship beliefs than it was forecasted for the present study.

Regarding the gender differences on irrational relationship beliefs, it was found that males have more irrational relationship beliefs than females; however, this difference was not statistically significant. Some studies in the literature support this finding (Eşiyok & Kıran-Esen, 2017; Gizir, 2013; Küçükarslan & Gizir, 2014; Hembrecht, 2009). Specifically, Küçükarslan and Gizir (2014) found that male participants had higher scores on "love finds a way" and "love at first sight"

dimensions than females, whereas Slavinskienė and Žardeckaitė-Matulaitienė (2012) stated that males reported more sexual perfectionism than females. Additionally, Hembrecht (2009) indicated that males are more likely to have mind reading expectancy than females.

Regarding romantic relationships, the effects of gender roles are mostly seen in initiating and maintaining relationship processes (Eryılmaz & Ercan, 2010). Specifically, men are expected to initiate a relationship and verbalize romantic relationships rather than women. Therefore, these types of stereotypes might have an impact on male participants' irrational relationship beliefs (Öcal-Yüceol; 2016). Another interpretation of this finding may be related to cultural factors which also affect the formation of gender roles. More precisely, the literature of irrational relationship beliefs reveals different findings which depend on how collectivistic or individualistic the culture is. For instance, studies indicating the positive relationship between irrational relationship beliefs and relationship outcomes such as commitment, satisfaction and marriage attitudes (Karabacak & Çiftçi, 2016; Sari & Owen, 2016) were from Turkey, which is considered a collectivistic culture, while studies (Fitzpatrick & Sollie, 1999; Tukachinsky & Dorros, 2018) that negatively link irrational relationship beliefs to commitment and satisfaction were from Western cultures, which are accepted in the literature as individualistic. Considering the findings of the studies mentioned above, living in an individualistic or collectivistic culture might have an impact on individuals' perception of the irrational relationship beliefs and gender roles through the formation process of gender roles.

In the literature, there is also an inconsistency between the findings regarding the effect of relationship beliefs. For instance, spouses who have a high level of irrational relationship beliefs are likely to report lower relationship satisfaction (Bradbury & Fincham, 1993; Epstein & Eidelson, 1981). However, spouses who have high standards are likely to report higher relationship satisfaction (Baucom et al. 1996). This suggests that certain conditions are dominant factors in linking the evaluations of a specific relationship with general beliefs.

### **5.1.2 Discussion of the Indirect Effects**

In the present study, the indirect effects of the variables are examined. In the following paragraphs, they are discussed separately.

In hypothesis 2, it was assumed that the relationship between RDS variables (knowledge of warning signs and relationship confidence) and commitment would be mediated by satisfaction. The analysis confirmed this hypothesis, and the result was in line with the literature, especially considering the predictive power of satisfaction on commitment.

Studies examining the investment model variables come up with the same result: satisfaction is the most powerful factor constructing commitment (Le & Agnew; Durko & Petrick, 2015). Additionally, social cognitive theory emphasizes the role of the positive effect of self-efficacy beliefs on relationship outcomes. It does this by affecting thoughts, behavior, and feelings. Therefore, based on the present study findings, it is possible that the beliefs about maintaining a relationship and the degree of knowledge of warning signs affected the feelings and thoughts both directly and indirectly. Especially for relationship confidence, this particular result appears more meaningful. Furthermore, the reciprocalism principle of social cognitive theory can be used to interpret this finding. Since mastery experiences are one of the sources of efficacy beliefs, participants' experiences during the early times of their relationship might have a positive impact on their satisfaction and commitment, which might lead to an increase in relationship confidence. Another reason for this finding could be the duration of the participants' relationships, which was higher than two years. In other words, during the relationship process, participants could gain experience in relationships in terms of being aware of warning signs and becoming confident in sustaining a relationship.

In hypothesis 3, the mediator role of the RDS variables (knowledge of warning signs and relationship confidence) in the relationship between irrational relationship beliefs and satisfaction was investigated. Results yielded that knowledge of warning signs and relationship confidence partially mediated the relationship between

irrational relationship beliefs and satisfaction. This result can be interpreted in two respects. Firstly, this result was unexpected considering that studies emphasized the negative role of irrational relationship beliefs on relationship outcomes. Additionally, this result seems understandable regarding the previous explanations of RBQ, specifically for the psychometric characteristics of it along with the effects of cultural factors.

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Studies examining the investment model variables come up with the same result: satisfaction was the most powerful factor constructing the commitment (Le & Agnew, Durko & Petrick, 2015). Besides, social cognitive theory emphasized the role of the positive effect of self-efficacy beliefs on relationship outcomes by affecting thoughts, behavior, and feelings. Therefore, based on the present study findings, it was possible that the beliefs about maintaining a relationship and the degree of being knowledgeable about warning signs affected the feelings and thoughts both directly and indirectly. Especially for the relationship confidence, this particular result seems more meaningful. Furthermore, reciprocalism principle of the social cognitive theory can be used to interpret this finding. Since mastery experiences are one of the sources of efficacy beliefs, participants' experiences during early times of their relationship might have a positive impact on their satisfaction and commitment which might lead an increase on relationship confidence. Another reason for this finding could be related to participants' duration of relationship which was higher than two years. In other words, during the relationship process, participants could gain experience on relationships in terms of being aware of warning signs and being confident on sustaining a relationship.



In hypothesis 3, the mediator role of the RDS variables (knowledge of warning signs and relationship confidence) in the relationship between irrational relationship beliefs and satisfaction was investigated. Results yielded that knowledge of warning signs and relationship confidence partially mediated the relationship between irrational relationship beliefs and satisfaction. This result can be interpreted in two aspects. Firstly, this result was unexpected when taking into consideration the studies emphasizing the negative role of irrational relationship beliefs on relationship outcomes. On the other hand, regarding the previous explanations on RBQ, specifically for the psychometric characteristics of it and the effects of cultural factors, this result seems understandable.

For relationship confidence, the findings of the present study can be understood considering relationship confidence, relationship efficacy and self-efficacy literature since they reflect similar meanings in the present study. Results of the current study revealed that relationship confidence is positively associated with satisfaction. Parallel to this finding, a similar result emerged from another study conducted by Deitz, Anderson, Johnson, Hardy, Zheng, and Liu (2015), who reported that relationship confidence was positively associated with relationship satisfaction. Likewise, there are several studies examining self-efficacy in romantic relationships. For instance, Riggio et al. (2013) indicated that self-efficacy in romantic relationships predicts satisfaction. Precisely, they emphasized the role of self-efficacy in romantic relationship with three separate studies aiming to prove the predictor role of self-efficacy beliefs at different times while controlling some important features of a relationship, such as duration of relationship and type. According to Bandura (1997), one's beliefs about being a relationship partner influences relationship outcomes by making changes in behaviors, feelings, and thoughts (as cited in Riggio et al., 2013). Considering Bandura's explanations of self-efficacy, the mediator role of relationship confidence between irrational relationship beliefs and satisfaction seems meaningful. In other words, a partner with a higher level of relationship confidence has more "can do" beliefs in the relationship, and this kind of thinking might result in positive relationship outcomes.

Regarding the mediator role of knowledge of warning signs in the relationship between the irrational relationship beliefs and satisfaction, the findings of the present study yielded similar results to the literature. Taking into consideration of sliding versus deciding model, being unaware of warning signs in a relationship is an indicator of sliding in relationships. Clifford et al. (2017) conducted a longitudinal study to test the usefulness of the sliding versus deciding model in relational uncertainty situations. In this study, relationship talk during relationship transition times was found to negatively associate with relationship satisfaction at first; however, relational uncertainty did not predict relationship satisfaction after 14 months. From this perspective, this particular finding is similar to the present study findings. More specifically, if one's knowledge of warning signs in relationships increases, the risk of sliding decreases. This situation may relate to a higher level of satisfaction.

Additionally, like relationship confidence, the items of the knowledge of warning signs scale were similar to the self-efficacy beliefs. With this in mind, it is understandable that if one feels capable of being aware of the warning signs in a relationship, the relationship satisfaction may increase.

In hypothesis 4, the relationship between knowledge of warning signs and satisfaction was provided with the mediation of relationship confidence and the mediation effect was full. Like other hypotheses, this finding runs parallel to the literature and is meaningful regarding social cognitive theory. As explained in the introduction section, even if individuals have enough awareness about a specific topic, they should have confidence or self-efficacy in performance (Wood & Bandura, 1989). In other words, as Bandura (1981) stated in the conceptual framework of his study, knowing what to do does not mean competency or taking action. Nevertheless, the performance of a skill towards a specific action requires activation of cognitive, social, and motor skills. In contrast, individuals whose perceptions of their capabilities are low or view themselves as inefficacious are more likely to exaggerate the obstacles and, in turn, to give up. Considering this information, the mediation role of relationship confidence seems coherent. Besides,

the sliding versus deciding model also emphasizes the vital role of relationship confidence on one's decision-making process in romantic relationships (Vennum & Fincham, 2011).

Concerning romantic relationships, previous empirical studies showed the importance of relationship confidence on satisfaction (Büyükşahin, 2005; Cui et al., 2008). In these studies, people who are confident or have self-efficacy reported a greater level of satisfaction and relationship maintenance behaviors.

A possible reason for the full-mediation might be related to the participants' level of relationship confidence. In Table 12, 20 is the highest score for relationship confidence. Keeping in mind the participants mean scores of this scale, one can conclude that participants of the current study seemed confident in managing a relationship ( $M = 17.59$ ,  $SD = 2.44$ ) which may lead to a full mediation.

### **5.1.3. Discussion Regarding the Psychometric Characteristics of the Relationship Deciding Scale (RDS)**

In order to measure the thoughtfulness of individuals within a romantic relationship, the Relationship Deciding Scale (RDS), developed by Vennum and Fincham (2011), was adapted into Turkish. Results of the adaptation study proved that RDS is a valid and reliable measure to use in Turkish culture. Moreover, the results of the adaptation study were found to be very similar to the original. For instance, the deciding subscale had the lowest reliability score, where relationship confidence had the highest score on both forms. The other evidence is related to modification, which was adding a covariance between the error terms of two items (item 8 and item 12). This procedure was applied in the same manner both in the original study and adaptation study. Also, both forms explain very close variances. Specifically, the original RDS explains 63% of the variance, while the Turkish form of RDS explains 58.35% of the variance. The last example is about concurrent validity, namely negotiation was found to be an inappropriate instrument for concurrent validity both in the original and present study.

However, the main data of the present study yielded conflicting results in terms of the reliability score of the deciding subscale ( $\alpha < .60$ ). Since it was below .60, indicating inadequacy for use in further analyses, the deciding subscale was excluded from the main study. Although the pilot study and main study were conducted in the same population (same age group, same university), the different sample characteristics may affect the study results overall.

## **5.2. Implications for Theory**

In the literature, several theories and frameworks were used to conceptualize the commitment and understanding the factors affecting it. The hypothesized model of the current study was established based on the investment model and social cognitive theory. The utilization of these theories in the present study as background frameworks provides some implications for theory.

Firstly, the use of investment model alongside with social cognitive theory in testing the proposed model contributes to the literature as a support for the conceptualization of the study variables in an integrated perspective. Specifically, confirming the hypothesis that proposes the mediating role of relationship confidence in the relationship between the knowledge of warning signs and satisfaction indicates the adaptability of utilizing these theories together.

Next, in the present study, commitment is conceptualized regarding the investment model and findings replicated that investment model is appropriate to use among Turkish university student population. Besides, the present study findings could be a source of the validation of the role of satisfaction in commitment. In other words, this study shows that satisfaction is the strongest predictor of the commitment in the investment model like meta-analyses studies indicate (Le & Agnew, 2003; Tran et al., 2019).

The last implication for theory is related to extending of validation of the study variables (irrational relationship beliefs, knowledge of warning signs, relationship confidence, satisfaction, and commitment) in terms of indicating their measurement invariance. Besides, using multi-group modeling as an advanced statistical analysis

is sparse in Turkish romantic relationship literature. Therefore, the findings of the present study contribute to the literature.

### **5.3 Implications for Practice**

The results offer several implications for practice and research. These suggestions are not only for counseling; they also include the fields of education, health, and sociology.

First of all, the current study revealed helpful findings for practice in terms of understanding the predictors of commitment and levels of specific relationship dynamics, namely, irrational relationship beliefs, knowledge of warning signs, relationship confidence, satisfaction, and commitment. For instance, mental health practitioners carry out relationship education programs to help couples and individuals have healthy and satisfactory relationships. Specifically, relationship education programs aim to increase the knowledge of participants of romantic relationships, teaching skills which are effective in satisfactory relationships and organizing/reorganizing the expectations and attitudes of participants regarding romantic relationships. Considering the findings related to the irrational relationship beliefs and relationship deciding variables (relationship confidence and knowledge of warning signs), the present study provides perspective to counselors and experts who are working in relationship education programs. The impact of beliefs towards romantic relationships can be better integrated to education programs. The relationship education programs are also crucial for university students because this period is seen as a "reachable moment," which means that a period where an individual is quite open to learning about romantic relationships (Ooms & Wilson, 2004). These programs can be designed for educational settings as well as community settings (Fincham et al., 2011; Markman & Rhoades, 2012). Additionally, university counseling centers can benefit from the results of the present study while developing programs. According to the results of the present study, relationship confidence and satisfaction are crucial factors in commitment. Furthermore, results revealed that relationship confidence fully mediates the relationship between knowledge of warnings signs and satisfaction. Bandura (1989)

stated that efficacy beliefs are essential for performance. Therefore, counselors and experts, in their relationship education programs, can place importance on being confident in maintaining a romantic relationship. Precisely, they can hold practices like teaching relationship skills such as conflict resolution techniques, role-playing and developing the appropriate expectations towards romantic relationships.

Furthermore, the results of the present study might serve as a guide for counselor educators in university settings. Precisely, instructors of the psychology of close relationships course, offered as an elective format in the new curriculum of the Guidance and Psychological Counseling Program (2018), can benefit from the results of the present study. Notably, the mediator role of relationship confidence in the relationship between knowledge of warning signs and satisfaction might lead instructors to integrate specific activities on how to empower relationship confidence in individuals and awareness levels of warning signs. For this aim, instructors can improve the counselor candidates' knowledge of warning signs in relationships as well as information about the role of social cognitive theory and the investment model in explaining relationship dynamics. More importantly, they can teach them how to deal with warning signs in a relationship or use constructive conflict resolution techniques in relationships because university students are in a period of exploration and "reachable moments." To achieve this aim, instructors can bring materials to the class (i.e., selected cases from the media showing the consequences of sliding) to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of sliding through the transitions. In this way, counselor candidates might become aware of how making conscious decisions influence relationship outcomes.

#### **5.4 Recommendations for Future Studies**

As in any other study, some recommendations for further research studies were proposed. First of all, deciding dimension of the Relationship Deciding Scale (RDS) had low reliability ( $\alpha < .60$ ) in the current study. Therefore, RDS should be tested again using the same sample inclusion criteria. Moreover, another recent study examined the factor structure of the RDS among Turkish university students (Tosun, Yazıcı & Altun, 2017). In that study, RDS yielded two-factor structure

(relationship confidence and directing relationship) as opposed to its original form. In the original form, RDS consists of three factors, namely, relationship confidence, knowledge of warning signs, and deciding. However, Tosun et al. (2017) found that the items of knowledge of warning signs and deciding dimensions constitute a new factor. Taking into consideration both findings of the current study and the Tosun et al. (2017) study, knowledge of warning signs and deciding dimensions of the RDS should be tested again since it seems that these dimensions need a revision in terms of clarifying operational definitions of the items.

Subsequently, the relationship between the irrational relationship beliefs and study variables (satisfaction, knowledge of warning signs, and relationship confidence) was positive in the current study, contrary to the hypotheses. One possible explanation for this might be related to the characteristics of the instruments used in the studies. Precisely, regarding the available literature, the relationship between the irrational relationship beliefs and relationship variables usually differ either positive or negative depending on the characteristics of the instruments used in the studies. For instance, studies that used Relationship Belief Questionnaire as a data collection tool disclosed positive relationship among the relationship variables, whereas studies used Relationship Belief Inventory as an instrument revealed negative relationships. Therefore, it seems beneficial for future researchers to test the same model by using different instruments while measuring irrational relationship belief. By this way, future researchers might become aware of the measurement effect in their studies.

Furthermore, in order to figure out the cultural effects on relationships among study variables, designing and applying a cross-cultural study that aims to test the hypothesized model using multi-group analysis could be helpful for future researchers. In other words, using multi-group analysis might provide rich information to the researchers who seek to see the differences caused by the cultural factors in a model. By this way, findings can be discussed from the different cultural lenses which may provide rich information about factors associated with commitment.

This study should be tested with different samples to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics of the relationships. For instance, studies with married people or individuals who are not university students should be included in future studies. Moreover, dyads should be investigated clearly by using the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (APIM) to take a step further in romantic relationship studies. Besides, this study can be tested with married, engaged, cohabiting, and dating individuals using multi-group modeling to see the differences (if any), which provides future researchers to extend their study findings. Another suggestion for future studies is testing the proposed model with individuals whose partners have problematic issues such as chronic illnesses and substance addiction. By this way, it becomes possible to examine the usefulness of the investment model on special issues in romantic relationships. Lastly, the present study is carried out with heterosexual individuals. Therefore, to increase the scope of the findings, it seems beneficial for future studies to include the individuals involved in same-sex relationships, since they may use different relationship maintenance strategies than individuals involved in heterosexual relationships (Umberson, Thomeer, & Lodge, 2015).

Investment model and social cognitive theory were used in the present study as theoretical borders in examining the relationships among study variables (irrational relationship beliefs, relationship confidence, knowledge of warning signs, satisfaction, and commitment variables). Future researchers may integrate different frameworks while examining the associations among these variables to extend the applicability of the findings.

Last but not least, future researchers should embody their research with other related variables such as attachment styles, conflict management, both of which were found considerably associated with commitment. Furthermore, considering the findings of the present study as well as the meta-analyses studies in the literature, satisfaction seems like the strongest predictor of the commitment. Therefore, paying attention to the factors affecting satisfaction through qualitative or mixed-method studies seems essential for future studies.



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## APPENDICES

### A. APPROVAL LETTER FROM HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE (RDS STUDY)

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ  
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER

ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

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Sayı: 28620816 / 283

08 ŞUBAT 2017

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu


Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)


İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu


Sayın Doç. Dr. Zeynep HATİPOĞLU SÜMER;


Danışmanlığını yaptığınız doktora öğrencisi Eda ÇÜRÜKVELİOĞLU KÖKSAL "*İlişkilerde Karar Verme Ölçeğinin Türkçe'ye Uyarlanması*" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay 2017-EGT-009 protokol numarası ile 08.02.2017 – 30.09.2017 tarihleri arasında geçerli olmak üzere verilmiştir.


Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.


  
Prof. Dr. Ş. Halil TURAN  
Başkan V


  
Prof. Dr. Ayhan SOL  
Üye

  
Prof. Dr. Ayhan Gürbüz DEMİR  
Üye

  
Doç. Dr. Yaşar KONDAKÇI  
Üye

  
Doç. Dr. Zana ÇITAK  
Üye

  
Yrd. Doç. Dr. Fınar KAYGAN  
Üye

  
Yrd. Doç. Dr. Emre SELÇUK  
Üye

**B. APPROVAL LETTER FROM HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE  
(MAIN STUDY)**

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ  
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER



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04 TEMMUZ 2017

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Doç. Dr. Zeynep HATİPOĞLU SÜMER;

Danışmanlığını yaptığımız doktora öğrencisi Eda ÇÜRÜKVELİOĞLU KÖKSAL'ın "*Beliren Yetişkinlikte Romantik İlişkiler: Yatırım Modeli ve Bilişsel Faktörler*" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay 2017-EGT-133 protokol numarası ile 05.07.2017 – 31.12.2017 tarihleri arasında geçerli olmak üzere verilmiştir.

Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.

Prof. Dr. Ş. Halil TURAN

Başkan V

Prof. Dr. Ayhan SOL

Üye

Prof. Dr. Ayhan Gürbüz DEMİR

Üye

Doç. Dr. Yeşar KONDAKCI

Üye

Doç. Dr. Zana ÇITAK

Üye

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Pınar KAYGAN

Üye

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Emre SELÇUK

Üye

## C. DATA COLLECTION PERMISSION (BARTIN UNIVERSITY)



T.C.  
BARTIN ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜ  
Genel Sekreterlik



Sayı : 79077966-044-E.1700002813 13/01/2017  
Konu : Ölçek Uygulama İzni

Sayın Arş. Gör. Eda ÇÜRÜKVELİOĞLU KÖKSAL

İlgi : Arş. Gör. Eda Çürükvelioğlu Köksalın 03.01.2017 tarihli ve 170000549 sayılı yazısı.

Doktora teziniz kapsamında hazırlanmış olduğumuz ilgi yazınız ekindeki ölçekleri, üniversitemiz Fakültelerinde ve Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Yüksekokulunda eğitim gören öğrencilere uygulamanız Rektörlüğümüzce uygun görülmüştür.  
Bilgilerinizi rica ederim.

*e-İmza*

Prof. Dr. Selman KARAYILMAZLAR  
Rektör Yardımcısı

[Bilgi Derslikleri İçin: http://www.bartin.edu.tr/SEMS/Basvuru/Onaylanmis/Pages/Tablo.aspx?tablo=01&YER=01](http://www.bartin.edu.tr/SEMS/Basvuru/Onaylanmis/Pages/Tablo.aspx?tablo=01&YER=01) kodu ile tek belgeyi görüntüleyebilirsiniz.

Adres : Bartın Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi/ Mekezi-	Bilgi İşlem Birim : Recep MEVİSİ - Şef
BARTIN	Tel/İletişim : (0 378) 2225481 (Genel)
e-posta : <a href="mailto:recep@bartin.edu.tr">recep@bartin.edu.tr</a>	Bilgi İşlem No : (0 378) 2225042
	İnternet Adresi : <a href="http://www.bartin.edu.tr/">http://www.bartin.edu.tr/</a>

1700002813 numaralı belge, 2017 yılının Ocak ayında 13 Ocak 2017 tarihinde gönderilmiştir. 13.01.2017 tarihinde görevi bitmiştir.

## D. ADAPTATION PERMISSION OF RELATIONSHIP DECIDING SCALE

### Response from Dr. Francis Fincham

----- ffincham@fsu.edu tarafından iletilen ileti -----

Tarih: 23 December 2015, 15:44

Kimden: "Fincham, Francis" <ffincham@fsu.edu>

Konu: RE: asking permission for Relationship Deciding Scale

Kime: eda çürükvelioğlu <edacurukvelioglu@gmail.com>

Please do use it

---Original Message---

From: eda çürükvelioğlu [mailto:[edacurukvelioglu@gmail.com](mailto:edacurukvelioglu@gmail.com)]

Sent: Wednesday, December 23, 2015 6:17 AM

To: [avv07c@fsu.edu](mailto:avv07c@fsu.edu); Fincham, Francis <[ffincham@fsu.edu](mailto:ffincham@fsu.edu)>

Subject: asking permission for Relationship Deciding Scale

Dear Dr. Vennum and Dr. Fincham,

I am Eda Çürükvelioğlu-Köksal, a PhD student in the program of Psychological Counseling and Guidance at Middle East Technical University in Turkey.

In my master thesis, I studied on romantic relationship satisfaction. Now, in my dissertation, I want to study on romantic relationships regarding beliefs, decision making process etc.. I read your article "Assessing Decision Making in Young Adult Romantic Relationships" which inspired me a lot. In my dissertation, I want to use this scale. Would you mind if I use this scale in my research and adapt it into Turkish?

Sincerely

Res. Assist. Eda Çürükvelioğlu-Köksal

### Response from Dr. Amber Vennum (24 December 2015 05:06 via Facebook\*)

Hello! Yes, it is totally fine for you to adapt and use the scale. Just cite our scale as the pre adapted original. Good luck with your research.

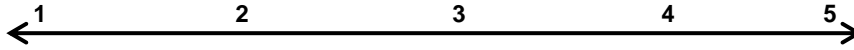
\* The connection between the Dr. Vennum was provided via Facebook since there was an problem on e-mail connection.

## E. RELATIONSHIP DECIDING SCALE (SAMPLE ITEMS)

Aşağıdaki ifadeler, üniversite öğrencilerinin romantik ilişkilere yönelik görüşlerini ve davranışlarını belirlemek amacı ile hazırlanmıştır. Aşağıdaki ifadelere katılma derecenizi, şu an bir ilişkinizin olması ya da olmamasından bağımsız olarak, *ilişkiler hakkındaki GENEL YAKLAŞIMINIZI düşünerek* işaretleyiniz.

Kesinlikle  
Katılmıyorum

Kesinlikle  
Katılıyorum



1	İlişkilerimde ortaya çıkan çatışmalarla etkili bir biçimde başa çıkabileceğime inanıyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Bir ilişkiyi istikrarlı bir şekilde sürdürmek için gerekli becerilere sahibim.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Kötü giden bir ilişkideki tehlike/uyarı işaretlerini erkenden fark edebilirim.	1	2	3	4	5
6	İlişkide bir sonraki adımı atmadan önce (örneğin, fiziksel olarak yakınlaşmak) bunun artı ve eksilerini tartarım.	1	2	3	4	5
12	İlişkide her bir büyük adımı atmadan önce dikkatlice düşünmektense "akışına bırakmak" daha iyidir.	1	2	3	4	5



## F. RELATIONSHIP BELIEFS QUESTIONARIE (SAMPLE ITEMS)

Aşağıdaki ifadeler, üniversite öğrencilerinin romantik ilişkilere yönelik görüşlerini ve davranışlarını belirlemek amacı ile hazırlanmıştır. Aşağıdaki ifadelere katılma derecenizi, şu an bir ilişkinizin olması ya da olmamasından bağımsız olarak, *ilişkiler hakkındaki GENEL YAKLAŞIMINIZI düşünerek* işaretleyiniz.

1= Hiç Katılmıyorum      2 = Biraz Katılıyorum      3 = Katılıyorum  
4 = Çok Katılıyorum      5= Tamamen Katılıyorum

1. Partnerim, tüm duygu ve düşüncelerini benimle paylaşmalı.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Partnerim, aklımdan geçenleri okuyabilmeli.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Partnerimi seviyorsam, onsuz çok fazla zaman geçirmemeliyim.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Partnerime karşı her zaman tutku dolu olmalıyım.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Partnerimin hoşlanmadığım özelliklerinin olmasını sorun etmem, çünkü zamanla onları değiştirebilirim.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Bu dünyada benim için sadece tek bir doğru kişi vardır.	1	2	3	4	5

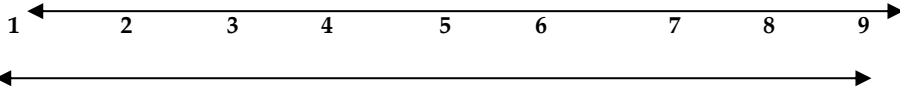
## G. INVESTMENT MODEL SCALE (SAMPLE ITEMS)

### Satisfaction Subscale

Şu andaki ilişkinizi göz önüne alarak, aşağıdaki ifadelerin her birine ne derecede katıldığınızı belirtiniz.

Tamamen yanlış

Tamamıyla doğru



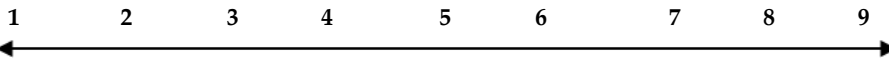
2. İlişkimiz benim için doyum verici.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3. İlişkim başkalarının ilişkilerinden çok daha iyi.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
4. İlişkim ideal bir ilişkiye yakındır.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

### Commitment Subscale

Şu andaki ilişkinizi göz önüne alarak, aşağıdaki ifadelerin her birine ne derecede katıldığınızı belirtiniz.

Tamamen yanlış

Tamamıyla doğru



1. İlişkimizin çok uzun bir süre devam etmesini istiyorum.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3. İlişkimiz çok yakın bir zamanda bitecek olsa çok büyük üzüntü hissetmezdim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
5. Birlikte olduğum kişiye ve ilişkimize çok bağlanmış hissediyorum.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

## H. PERSONAL INFORMATION FORM

### Değerli katılımcı,

Aşağıdaki ifadeler, kişilerin romantik ilişkilere yönelik görüşlerini ve davranışlarını belirlemek amacı ile hazırlanmıştır. Sizden istenilen verilen ölçekleri içtenlikle ve boş bırakmadan yanıtlamanızdır. Verdiğiniz yanıtlar gizli tutulacaktır. Katkılarınız için teşekkür ederim. Herhangi bir sorunuz olduğu takdirde, aşağıdaki iletişim bilgilerinden ulaşabilirsiniz.

Arş. Gör. Eda ÇÜRÜKVELİOĞLU KÖKSAL  
Bartın Üniv., Rehberlik ve Psikolojik Danışmanlık Anabilim Dalı  
E-mail: edacurukvelioglu@gmail.com

### Kişisel Bilgiler

1. Cinsiyetiniz : Kadın ( ) Erkek ( )
2. Yaşınız: .....
3. Fakülteniz: .....
4. Şu an devam eden bir ilişkiniz var mı? Evet ( ) Hayır ( )
5. İlişkiniz aşağıdakilerden hangisine daha uygun?  
Flört ( ) Ciddi bir birliktelik ( ) Nişanlı ( ) Evli ( )
6. Ne kadar süredir ilişkinize devam etmektesiniz?  
(yıl ve ay olarak yazınız, örn.3 yıl 2 ay) ..... yıl .....ay

## I. CURRICULUM VITAE

Eda Çürükvelioğlu-Köksal  
edacurukvelioglu@gmail.com

### Education

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MS	METU Psychological Counseling and Guidance	2012
BS	Maltepe University Psychological Counseling and Guidance Department (100% scholarship)	2009
High School	Mehmet Çelikel Anatolian High School	2005

### Work Experience

Year	Place	Enrollment
2013 November-Present	Bartın University Department of Educational Sciences	Research Assistant
2010 February	Kırıkkale University Department of Educational Sciences	Research Assistant
2009 November	En Çalışkanlar Special Education and Rehabilitation Center	School Counselor
2009 September	Yakın İlgı Special Education and Rehabilitation School	School Counselor

### Foreign Languages

Advanced English

## **Master Thesis**

Romantic Relationship Satisfaction in Emerging Adulthood: The Role of Self Concept Clarity and Personal Agency [Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zeynep Hatipoğlu Sümer]

## **Publications**

Ünal, F., Tarhan, S., & **Çürükvelioğlu-Köksal, E.** (2018). Gender and Perception of Profession. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 6(n3a), 35-44.

**Çürükvelioğlu-Köksal, E.** (2018). Attitudes towards Psychological Help-Seeking among Preservice Primary School Teachers. *İlköğretim Online*, 17(4).

Ünal, F., Tarhan, S., & **Çürükvelioğlu-Köksal, E.** (2017). Toplumsal cinsiyet algısını yordamada cinsiyet, sınıf, bölüm ve toplumsal cinsiyet oluşumunun rolü. *Bartın Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 6(1), 227-236.

Tarhan, S., Ünal, F., & **Çürükvelioğlu-Köksal, E.** (2017). A Conceptual Study on Pedagogical Formation Students: Gender. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 5(n12A), 102-110.

## **Papers Presented in National and International Conferences**

**Çürükvelioğlu-Köksal, E.,** & Hatipoğlu-Sümer Z. (2018). İlişkide Karar Verme Ölçeğinin Türkçeye Uyarlanması [Adaptation of Relationship Deciding Scale into Turkish]. 20. Uluslararası Psikolojik Danışma ve Rehberlik Kongresi, Samsun, Turkey.

**Çürükvelioğlu-Köksal, E.,** & Tarhan, S. (2018). Bilişsel Esneklik Üzerine Doküman Analizi [Document Analysis on Cognitive Flexibility]. 20. Uluslararası Psikolojik Danışma ve Rehberlik Kongresi, Samsun, Turkey.

**Çürükvelioğlu-Köksal, E.,** & Hatipoğlu-Sümer Z. (2018). The role of self-concept clarity and personal agency in predicting romantic relationship satisfaction of emerging adults. SSEA Thematic Conference: Self and Identity in Emerging Adulthood, Cluj-Napoca, Romania.

Ünal, F., Tarhan, S., & **Çürükvelioğlu-Köksal, E.** (2017). Gender and Perception of Profession. 3rd International Conference on Lifelong Learning And Leadership For All, Porto, Portugal.

**Çürükvelioğlu-Köksal, E.** (2017). Dating Status, Adaptive - Maladaptive Perfectionism and Big-Five Personality Traits as Predictors of Life Satisfaction in Emerging Adulthood. ECER 2017 Copenhagen - European Conference on Educational Research, Emerging Researchers's Conference, Copenhagen, Denmark.

**Çürükvelioğlu-Köksal, E. ,Tarhan, S. (2016).** Sınıf öğretmeni adaylarının yaşam doyumlarının çeşitli değişkenler açısından incelenmesi [Examining pre-service primary school teachers' life satisfaction regarding some variables]. 15. Uluslararası Sınıf Öğretmenliği Eğitimi Sempozyumu, Muğla, Turkey.

Tarhan, S. , **Çürükvelioğlu-Köksal, E. (2016).** Sınıf öğretmeni adaylarının temel empati düzeyleri ile yaşam doyumları arasındaki ilişki [The relationship between basic empathy skills and life satisfaction levels on pre-service primary school teachers.]. 15. Uluslararası Sınıf Öğretmenliği Eğitimi Sempozyumu, Muğla, Turkey.

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Taştan, N. , Aslan, S. , **Çürükvelioğlu, E. (2011).** Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Evlilik Öncesi İlişkilerini Değerlendirmelerinin Kişilik Tipleriyle Yordanması [Predicting pre-marital relationship evaluations of Kirikkale university students with personality types.] . XI. Ulusal Psikolojik Danışma ve Rehberlik Kongresi, Izmir, Turkey.

Taştan, N. , **Çürükvelioğlu, E. (2010).** Kırıkkale Üniversitesi Eğitim ve Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi Öğrencilerinin Problem Alanları ve Kırıkkale Üniversitesi Danışma Rehberlik Uygulama ve Araştırma Merkezinden Beklentileri [Kirikkale University Faculty of Education and Science-Literature students' problem areas and expectations from Kirikkale University Counseling and Guidance Application and Research Center]. V. Üniversiteler Psikolojik Danışma ve Rehberlik Sempozyumu, Üniversite PDR Merkezleri: Güncel Uygulamalar ve Yönelimler, Mersin, Turkey.

## **Projects**

2018, EU Horizon 2020 (Position: Seconded Person), European Project RISEWISE: Women with disabilities and Social Engagement (GA690874)

2018, BAP (Position: Researcher): Bartın Halkının Bartın Üniversitesi'nden Beklentilerinin Belirlenmesi [The Determination Of The Expectations Of Bartın People From Bartın University], Bartın University, Bartın, Turkey.

2018, BAP (Position: Researcher): Bartın Üniversitesi Öğrencilerinin Ve Öğretim Elemanlarının Akademik Danışmanlık Hizmetleri Hakkındaki Görüş Ve Beklentilerinin Belirlenmesi [Determination Of Opinions And Expectations Of Bartın University Students And Academic Staff About Academic Consultancy Services], Bartın University, Bartın, Turkey.

2016, BAP (Position: Researcher): Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Toplumsal Cinsiyet Rollerine İlişkin Görüşlerinin Belirlenmesi [Examining Primary School Teachers' and Social Sciences Teacher' Views on Gender Equality], Bartın University, Bartın, Turkey.

2015, EU Lifelong Learning Program Grundtvig Project (Participant), NonViolent Conflict Management. Educational Strategies for European Integration and Co-Existence, CONPAX, Bartın, Turkey.

2014, EU Lifelong Learning Program Grundtvig Project (Participant), NonViolent Conflict Management. Educational Strategies for European Integration and Co-Existence, CONPAX, Madrid, Spain.

2013, EU Erasmus Project (Participant), Developing Effective Schools for Inclusion, DESI-2, Palencia, Spain.

#### **Awards and Honors**

2019	Conference Scholarship, European Conference on Educational Research - ECER	EARA	Hamburg
2012-2017	2211 National Doctoral Scholarship	TÜBİTAK	Turkey
2010-2012	2210 National Master Scholarship	TÜBİTAK	Turkey
2010-2011	Graduate Courses Performance Award	METU	Turkey

#### **Memberships of Scientific Institutions**

International Association Relationship Research (IARR)

The Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood (SSEA)

Turkish Psychological Counseling and Guidance Association

**Research Interests**

Romantic Relationships, Relationship Education Programs, Gender Roles, Higher Education, Procrastination, Self-Concept

**Hobbies**

Cooking, Movies, Music, Reading, Swimming, Travelling



## J. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKCÖ ÖZET

Romantik ilişkiler çoęu insanın yaşamında önemli bir rol oynamaktadır (Kelley ve dię., 2002; Watson, Hubbard ve Wiese, 2000); bu nedenle, özellikle son yıllarda romantik ilişki çalışmalarına büyük önem verilmiştir. Romantik ilişkilerin genç yetişkinlikte oldukça dikkate değer olmasının nedeni, bu gelişim döneminde romantik bir ilişkiye dahil olmanın gelişim görevi olmasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Başka bir deyişle, bu gelişim döneminde romantik bir ilişkiye sahip olmak, dięer dönemlerde olabileceğinden daha önemlidir (Erikson, 1968; Arnett, 2004). Ayrıca, genç yetişkinlerin romantik ilişkileri onların mutluluęu ile ilişkilidir (Demir, 2008; Myers ve Diener; 1995) ve daha sonraki yaşamları üzerinde uzun vadeli bir etkiye sahiptir (Fincham ve Cui, 2011; Arnett, 2004). Sağlıklı bir ilişkinin kurulması ve sürdürülmesi, davranış, duygu, biliş, inançlar gibi hemen hemen yaşamın her alanında etkili olduęu için de önemlidir (Furman ve Shaffer, 2003; Regan, 2011). Bu nedenle, üniversite öğrencileri ile ilgili romantik ilişki çalışmalarında ilişkilerin nasıl ve niçin devam ettięi ile ilgili faktörleri anlamak önem arz etmektedir.

Literatürde, bağlılık; sağlıklı ve istikrarlı ilişkiler için ilişki sürdürme davranışlarına katılma eğilimini belirleyen, ilişkilerin temel bir bileşeni olarak kabul edilmektedir (Rusbult, Drigotas ve Verette, 1994). Literatürde bağlılık daha fazla olumlu yorumlamalar, (Morry ve Sucharyna, 2016), ilişkinin devam etmesi ve fedakârlık istekleri (Etcheverry ve Le, 2005), alternatiflerin azaltılması (Rodrigues, Lopes ve Kumashiro, 2017; Smith, 2015), sosyal onaysızlık (Lehmiller ve Agnew, 2006), daha fazla ebeveyn ve arkadaş desteęi (Rodrigues, Lopes, Monteiro ve Prada, 2017) ve daha az şiddet (Stanley, Whitton ve Markman, 2004) ile ilişkilendirilmiştir. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma çok boyutlu bir durum olan bağlılık hakkında derinlemesine bilgi edinmek için bağlılığı bağımlı deęişken olarak ele almaktadır.

Rusbult ve Buunk'a (1993, s.180) göre bağıllık, "devam eden bir ilişkide geniş bir yelpazedeki davranışları doğrudan etkileyen hem bilişsel hem de duygusal bileşenleri içeren öznel bir durum" olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Bağıllık, uzun vadeli yönelim ve ilişkileri daha iyi veya daha kötüsü için sürdürme niyetini de yansıtır. Bu çalışmada bağıllık, son yıllarda ilişkileri açıklamak için faydalı bir model olduğu kanıtlanan yatırım modeli ile incelenmiştir (Regan, 2011).

Yatırım modeline göre bağıllık; doyum düzeyi, alternatiflerin niteliği ve yatırım miktarı gibi bileşenlerin etkileşimi olarak açıklanır. Başka bir deyişle, bir kişi ilişkisine yüksek oranda bağlı olduğu zaman, üç özellik vardır: (1) bireyin doyum düzeyi yüksektir, (2) bireyin alternatiflerinin niteliği düşüktür ve (3) bireyin yatırım büyüklüğü yüksektir. Bununla birlikte, yatırım modelindeki bağıllığın bileşenleri arasında yapılan ampirik çalışmalar, doyumun bağıllığın en güçlü yordayıcısı olduğunu göstermektedir (Le ve Agnew, 2003; Lemay; 2016; Sacher ve Fine, 1996). Bu nedenle, bağıllık üzerindeki doyumun yordayıcı rolü dikkate alınarak bu çalışmada bağıllık bileşenleri arasından sadece doyum değişkeni, oluşturulan modele dahil edilmiştir. Modele doyum değişkenini dâhil etmenin bir diğer nedeni de romantik ilişki literatürü ile ilişkilidir. Ampirik çalışmalar, bağıllığın yanı sıra çoğunlukla doyum ve bağlanma stilleri, çatışma yönetimi, kişilik tipleri, ilişki inançları, öznel iyi oluş gibi ilişkiye ilişkin diğer değişkenler arasındaki bağlantıları göstermektedir (Etcheverry, Le, Wu ve Wei, 2013; Cramer, 2000; Kashdan ve diğerleri, 2017; Kirkpatrick ve Davis, 1994; Van Tongeren ve Burnette, 2016). En önemlisi neden ise literatürün, doyum ve bu çalışmanın değişkenlerinin (irrasyonel ilişki inançları, uyarı işaretleri bilgisi, ilişki güveni) ilişkili olduğunu ve dolayısıyla bağıllığın açıklanmasına yardımcı olduğunu göstermesinden kaynaklanmaktadır.

Bağıllık tanımlarından da anlaşılacağı gibi, ne duygular ne de biliş bağıllığı açıklamak için yeterli değildir; ancak, bu bileşenlerin etkileşimi bağıllığı oluşturur. Başka bir deyişle, duyguların ve bilişlerin karşılıklılığı da dahil olmak üzere öznel bir değerlendirme, bireyin karar sürecinde ve ilişkiye devam edip

etmeme konusunda rol oynamaktadır. Sosyal bilişsel kurama göre, bireyler yalnızca dışsal olaylara karşı tepkisel değildir, aynı zamanda üçlü karşılıklı nedensellik sisteminde yer alan düşünce, motivasyon ve duygulanım süreçlerini de etkileme kapasitesine sahiptir (Bandura, 1986). Karşılıklı nedensellikte bilişsel ve duyuşsal etmenler gibi kişisel faktörler, davranış ve çevresel faktörler arasında bir etkileşim vardır (Wood ve Bandura, 1989). Ek olarak, Karney, McNulty ve Bradbury (2003) tarafından yapılan kapsamlı bir çalışmada, yakın ilişkilerdeki biliş üç boyuta ayrılmıştır: bilişin içeriği; bilişin yapısı ve biliş süreci. Bilişin içeriği boyutunda, bireylerle ve ilişkilerle ilgili değer ve inançlar; biliş yapısında, ilişki ile ilgili bilginin organizasyonu ve diğer iki boyutun da üreticisi olarak görülen biliş süreçleri boyutunda ise, ilgili bilginin nasıl işlendiği (ör., takip etme, değerlendirme, bütünleştirme) ele alınmıştır. Bu açıklamalar dikkate alındığında, bağlılığı etkileyen faktörleri anlamak amacıyla yatırım modelinin yanı sıra sosyal bilişsel kuramı da yol gösterici bir çerçeve olarak kullanmak uygun görülmektedir.

Bağlılığı etkileyen faktörlerden biri, bireylerin bir ilişkiye yönelik inanç veya beklentileridir. Yapılan çalışmalar, bağlılık ve ilişki inançları arasındaki bağı kanıtlamıştır (Fitzpatrick ve Sollie, 1999; Sprecher ve Metts, 1999; Öztekin, 2015). Bir ilişki kişiler için tatmin edici olduğunda, o ilişkinin nasıl olması gerektiği ve ideal bir eşin sahip olması gereken özellikler hakkında çeşitli inanç ve beklentiler vardır (Sprecher ve Metts, 1999). Romantik ilişkilere yönelik bu algı ve beklentiler, ilişki inançları (rasyonel ve irrasyonel inançlar ) olarak tanımlanır ve bireylerin öznel yargılama süreçlerini ve ilişki dinamiklerini etkilemektedir (Stackert ve Bursik, 2003; Eidelson ve Epstein, 1982). İrrasyonel ilişki inançları ve işlevsel olmayan ilişki inançları terimleri literatürde birbirinin yerine kullanılmakla birlikte, bu çalışmada irrasyonel ilişki inançları tercih edilmiştir.

İrrasyonel ilişki inançları, ilişki doyumu ve bağlılık üzerinde belirli bir etkiye sahip olduğu için literatürde artan bir ilgiyle araştırılmaktadır. Her ne kadar irrasyonel ilişki inançlarını bağlılıkla ilişkilendiren çalışmalar olsa da (Vannier ve

O'Sullivan, 2017a; Fitzpatrick ve Sollie, 1999), irrasyonel ilişki inançları üzerine yapılan ulusal ve uluslararası çalışmaların çoğu, bağlılığın temellerinden biri olan ilişki doyumu üzerine odaklanmıştır (Sarı ve Korkut-Owen, 2016; Frazier ve Esterly, 1990). Ancak, yapılan çalışmalar irrasyonel ilişki inancının, ilişki doyumu ve bağlılık üzerinde tutarsız sonuçlar verdiğini göstermiştir. Literatürde irrasyonel ilişki inançları ile bağlılık arasındaki ilişkinin hem pozitif olduğu (Vannier ve Sullivan, 2017b) hem de negatif olduğu bulunmuştur (Fitzpatrick ve Sollie, 1999). Elde edilen tutarsız sonuçlar ise araştırmacılara değişkenler arasındaki ilişkileri daha detaylı incelemek üzere aracı değişkenlerin kullanılması yönünde ilham vermiştir.

Bu çalışmada, sosyal bilişsel kuram ve yatırım modeli dikkate alınarak, ilişki güveni, tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi ve doyum, irrasyonel ilişki inançları ile bağlılık arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyen aracı değişkenler olarak dahil edilmiştir. İlişki inançlarının yanı sıra, ilişkideki bilişsel bileşeni yansıtmak üzere özellikle iki değişkenin de bağlılık üzerinde etkisi vardır. Bunlar, bir ilişkiye başlamadan önce şekillenmiş olan ve ilişki sürecinde de değişebilecek olan tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi ve ilişki güveni değişkenleridir. Bu değişkenlerin sosyal bilişsel kuramın triadik karşılıklı nedenselliğindeki kişisel faktörler olarak sınıflandırılması, bağlılığa katkılarını anlamak açısından anlamlıdır. Ayrıca, bu değişkenler çevresel faktörlere göre değişebileceğinden, sosyal bilişsel kuramın da yardımıyla bunları açıklamaya çalışmak uygun görünmektedir. Yatırım modelinde bağlılığın bir parçası olan doyum dikkate alındığında ise, yine sosyal bilişsel kuram, ilişkilerde bilişin süreç bölümünü temsil eden değerlendirme sürecini içermesi açısından doyumu açıklamak için yol gösterici bir teori olarak değerlendirilebilir.

Daha önce belirtildiği gibi, bu çalışmanın ilk aracı değişkeni doyumdur. Ampirik çalışmalar net bir biçimde bağlılığın doyumla pozitif yönde ilişkili olduğunu göstermiştir (Fletcher, Simpson ve Thomas, 2000; Neff ve Karney, 2003; Rusbult, Martz ve Agnew, 1998; Stafford, Dainton ve Haas, 2000; Toplu-Demirtaş,

Hatipoğlu-Sümer ve White, 2013). Ayrıca meta-analiz çalışmaları, doyumun yatırım modeli bileşenleri arasında bağlılığın en güçlü belirleyicisi olduğunu ortaya koymuştur (Le ve Agnew, 2003; Lemay, 2016; Tran ve diğ., 2019). Bu bilgi dikkate alındığında doyum, aracı değişken olarak çalışmaya eklenmiştir. Bununla birlikte, doyum bağlılığın açıklanmasında en etkili değişken olsa da, hala keşfedilmemiş yönleri vardır (Le ve Agnew, 2003).

Bu çalışmada, irrasyonel ilişki inançları ile bağlılık arasındaki ilişkiyi etkileyebilecek diğer faktörleri araştırmak için iki aracı değişken eklenmiştir. Bunlardan ilki, bireylerin bir ilişkideki risk faktörleri hakkındaki farkındalıklarını ve bunlarla başa çıkma yeteneklerini gösteren tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisidir (Vennum ve Fincham, 2011). Tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisinin, doyum ve bağlılık üzerindeki rolünü gösteren bazı çalışmalar vardır (Davila ve ark., 2017; Vennum, Monk, Pasley ve Fincham, 2017; Clifford, Vennum, Busk ve Fincham, 2017). Bununla birlikte, literatürde vurgulandığı gibi, bireylerin ilişki becerilerini kullanma konusunda kendine güven ya da öz yeterliliği yoksa tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi yeterli olmayabilir. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma için başka bir aracı değişken olarak ilişki güveni eklenmiştir. Önceki araştırmalar, ilişki güveninin; doyum (Büyükşahin, 2005; Cui, Fincham ve Pasley, 2008) ve bağlılık (Riggio, Weiser, Valenzuela, Lui, Montes ve Heuer, 2013; Vennum ve Fincham, 2011) üzerinde önemli bir değişken olduğunu açıkça belirtmiştir. Ayrıca, Wood ve Bandura (1989), sosyal bilişsel kurama göre öz-yeterlik inancının kişilerarası yeterlilik ve başa çıkma becerisindeki olumlu rolünü vurgulamıştır. Bu bilgiyi göz önünde bulundurduğumuzda, ilişki güveni ayrıca tehlike/uyarı işaretleri ve doyum bilgisi arasındaki ilişkiye de aracılık edebilir.

İrrasyonel ilişki inançları ile bağlılık arasındaki ilişkinin kanıtlarını gösteren araştırma çalışmalarına rağmen, tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi, ilişki güveni ve doyum aracı değişken olarak inceleyen çalışmalar oldukça azdır. Değişkenler arasındaki ilişkilere ek olarak, bu değişkenleri daha önce bahsedilen teorilere göre birlikte kullanan çalışmalar da sınırlıdır. Bu nedenle, değişkenler arasındaki

ilişkileri belirlemek için, yatırım modeli ve sosyal bilişsel teori ışığında yapısal bir model (bkz. Şekil 1) önerilmiştir.

Cinsiyetin bağlılık üzerindeki rolü ile ilgili olarak, literatürdeki bulgular tutarlılık göstermemektedir. Bazı çalışmalarda cinsiyet, bağlılık üzerinde önemli bir faktör olarak bulunurken (Okutan ve Büyükşahin-Sunal, 2010; Stafford ve Canary, 1991), bazılarında ise bulunamamıştır (Aslan-Yılmaz, 2019; De Goede, Branje, van Duin ve VanderValk, 2012). Yukarıda belirtilen çalışmalara ek olarak, Lee ve Agnew (2003), bağlılığı etkileyen faktörlerle ilgili meta-analiz çalışmalarında kapsamlı sonuçlar elde etmiş ve cinsiyetin hem bağlılık hem de doyum konusunda anlamlı bir değişken olmadığını tespit etmiştir. Literatürdeki tutarsız sonuçlar göz önünde bulundurularak, bu çalışmada cinsiyetin önerilen modeldeki rolünü belirginleştirmek için çoklu grup yapısal eşitlik modeli analizi kullanılması amaçlanmıştır.

## **1.2 Araştırmanın Amacı**

Daha önce tartışıldığı gibi bilişsel süreçler, bireylerin hem doyum hem de bağlılık düzeylerinde önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Romantik ilişki literatüründeki son gelişmeler dikkate alındığında, çalışmanın temel amacı irrasyonel ilişki inançları, tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi, ilişki güveni ve ilişki doyumunu arasındaki ilişkileri ve bu değişkenlerin üniversite öğrencilerinin bağlılık düzeylerine etkisini incelemek olarak belirlenmiştir. Ayrıca araştırmanın asıl amacını incelemeyen önce, üniversite öğrencilerinin karar verme sürecini değerlendirmek için İlişkide Karar Verme Ölçeğinin (İKVÖ) Türkçe'ye uyarlanması gerekmiştir. Bu nedenle, İKVÖ'yü Türkçe'ye uyarlamak ve psikometrik özelliklerini araştırmak bu çalışmanın bir diğer amacını oluşturmaktadır. Bu amaçları incelemek için yatırım modeli ve sosyal bilişsel kuram araştırmanın temel aldığı teoriler olarak kullanılırken, geçiştirmeye karşılık karar verme modeli de İKVÖ'nün uyarlanma sürecinde kullanılmıştır.

### 1.3 Hipotezler

Araştırma soruları doğrultusunda aşağıdaki hipotezler oluşturulmuştur:

*Hipotez 1.* Kişisel bilişsel faktörler ve doyum, üniversite öğrencilerinin bağıllık düzeylerini anlamlı bir şekilde açıklamaktadır.

*Hipotez 1.1.* İrrasyonel ilişki inançları ve tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi arasında anlamlı negatif ilişki vardır (Bkz. Yol A).

*Hipotez 1.2.* İrrasyonel ilişki inançları ve ilişki güveni arasında anlamlı negatif ilişki vardır (Bkz. Yol B).

*Hipotez 1.3.* İrrasyonel ilişki inançları ve doyum arasında anlamlı negatif ilişki vardır (Bkz. Yol C).

*Hipotez 1.4.* Tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi ve bağıllık arasında anlamlı pozitif ilişki vardır (Bkz. Yol G).

*Hipotez 1.5.* İlişki güveni ve bağıllık arasında anlamlı pozitif ilişki vardır (Bkz Yol H).

*Hipotez 1.6.* Doyum ve bağıllık arasında anlamlı pozitif ilişki vardır (Bkz. Yol J).

*Hipotez 1.7.* Tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi ve doyum arasında anlamlı pozitif ilişki vardır (Bkz. Yol D).

*Hipotez 1.8.* İlişki güveni ve doyum arasında anlamlı pozitif ilişki vardır (Bkz. Yol E).

*Hipotez 1.9.* Tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi ve ilişki güveni arasında anlamlı pozitif ilişki vardır (Bkz. Yol F).

*Hipotez 2.* İKVÖ değişkenleri (tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi ve ilişki güveni) ve bağıllık arasındaki ilişki, doyum aracılığı ile sağlanacaktır.

*Hipotez 2.1.* Tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi ve bağıllık arasındaki ilişki, doyum aracılığı ile sağlanacaktır.

*Hipotez 2.2.* İlişki güveni ve bağlılık arasındaki ilişki, doyum aracılığı ile sağlanacaktır.

*Hipotez 3.* İrrasyonel ilişki inançları ve doyum arasındaki ilişki, İKVÖ değişkenleri (tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi ve ilişki güveni) aracılığı ile sağlanacaktır.

*Hipotez 3.1.* İrrasyonel ilişki inançları ve doyum arasındaki ilişki, tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi aracılığı ile sağlanacaktır.

*Hipotez 3.2.* İrrasyonel ilişki inançları ve doyum arasındaki ilişki, ilişki güveni aracılığı ile sağlanacaktır.

*Hipotez 4.* Tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi ve doyum arasındaki ilişki, ilişki güveni aracılığı ile sağlanacaktır.

*Hipotez 5.* İKVÖ Türk kültüründe kullanmak için geçerli ve güvenilir bir ölçme aracıdır.

#### **1.4 Araştırmanın Önemi**

Bu çalışma sadece romantik ilişki literatürü için değil, aynı zamanda rehberlik ve psikolojik danışma alanında da değerlidir.

Öncelikle, romantik ilişkilerin daha iyi anlaşılması, üniversite öğrencileri ile çalışan danışmanlara ve uygulayıcılara önemli ölçüde yardımcı olacaktır. Çoğu zaman beliren yetişkinlik dönemine karşılık gelen üniversite döneminde, bireylerin romantik bir ilişki başlatması, birlikte yaşamak için bir eş seçmesi ve bu ilişkiyi sürdürmesi beklenir (Arnett, 2004). Ayrıca, bireyler hayata yönelik beklentilerini keşfettikleri gibi aynı zamanda romantik ilişkilere yönelik beklentilerini de keşfettikleri bir dönemdedirler. Bu nedenle, üniversite dönemindeki romantik ilişkiler, bireyler için diğer yaşam evrelerinden daha önemlidir. Ayrıca, Ooms ve Wilson (2004), üniversite döneminin, bireylerin romantik ilişkiler hakkında bilgi edinmeye daha yatkın oldukları bir zaman olduğunu belirtmiş ve bu dönemi "ulaşılabilir an" olarak nitelendirmiştir.



Özellikle bu bilgiyi dikkate aldığımızda, üniversite öğrencileri arasındaki ilişki dinamiklerini etkileyen faktörlerin incelenmesi faydalı olacaktır. Böylece uzun süreli, sağlıklı ve doyum veren bir ilişki için etkili olan faktörler ve bu faktörlerin etki derecesi bu çalışma ile ortaya konabilecektir. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma bağlılık üzerinde etkili olabilecek irrasyonel ilişki inançları, tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi, ilişki güveni ve doyum arasındaki ilişkilerin yapısal bir model oluşturularak araştırılması sebebiyle önemlidir.

Ayrıca, oluşturulan modeldeki bağlılığı etkileyen faktörler arasında kadın ve erkek katılımcılar arasında bir fark olup olmadığını görmek için ileri istatistiksel analiz yöntemi olarak çoklu-grup yapısal eşitlik modeli kullanılmıştır. Bu analiz ile cinsiyete dayalı ölçme farkının olup olmama durumu incelenerek çalışmanın istatistiksel gücü olumlu yönde etkilenmektedir.

Bu çalışmanın bir diğer katkısı ise literatüre yeni bir ölçme aracı sağlamış olmasıdır. Daha önce de belirtildiği gibi, İlişkide Karar Verme Ölçeğinin (İKVÖ) psikometrik özelliklerinin Türk kültüründe test edilmesi çalışmanın bir diğer amacıdır. Bu nedenle, İKVÖ'ye yönelik bir uyarlama çalışması, bireylerin ilişkilerdeki düşüncesini değerlendirmeyi amaçlayan araştırmacılara ve uygulayıcılara katkı sağlayabilir. Ayrıca, İKVÖ, Türk alanyazında da yeni olan geçiştirmeye karşılık karar verme modeline dayanarak geliştirilmiştir. Bu model, romantik ilişkilerdeki önemli geçiş dönemlerinde bireylerin karar alma süreçlerine vurgu yapmaktadır. Aktif karar vermenin eksikliğini geçiştirme yansıtırken; varlığını ise karar verme terimi yansıtmaktadır.

Ayrıca, devam eden bir ilişkideki ilişki risklerinin farkında olmak ve bu risklere yönelik uygun önlemleri alabilmek karar vermenin belirleyicisi olarak bu modelde sunulmuştur. İlişkilerdeki risk faktörleri, tuzak görevi görerek ilişkiden ayrılmayı zorlaştıran bariyerleri artırır. Bu nedenle, ilişki faktörleri ile ilgili önleyici eylemleri anlamak ve almak için bireylerin karar verme sürecini geçiştirmeye karşılık karar verme perspektifinden belirlemek önemlidir. Türk

üniversite öğrencileri arasındaki karar verme sürecini anlamak için geçiştirmeye karşılık karar verme modelinin kullanılması, mevcut araştırmanın kültürel farklılıkların açıklığa kavuşturulmasına izin vererek katkılarını da genişletmektedir.

Bu çalışmanın son katkısı ise, psikolojik danışmaya yönelik uygulamalar arasında gösterilen ilişki eğitimi programlarını kapsamaktadır. Öğrencilerin psikolojik yardım için üniversite danışma merkezlerine başvurma nedenlerinden biri romantik ilişki problemleridir (Küçükarslan, 2011, Erkan, Özbay, Cihangir-Çankaya ve Terzi, 2012). Bu problem durumları ile etkili bir şekilde baş edebilmek için danışmanlar tarafından ilişki eğitimi programları hazırlanmalı ve öğrencilere ilişki dinamikleri hakkında önleyici bilgi verilmelidir (Fincham, Stanley ve Rhoades, 2011). Bu çalışmanın amacını dikkate aldığımızda, öğrenciler, ilişki inançlarının rolü, ilişkilerinde kullandıkları karar verme süreçleri ve doyum ve bağlılığı etkileyen aracı değişkenlerin rolü hakkında bilgi edinmelidir.

Sonuç olarak, bu çalışmanın alanyazına yeni bir ölçme aracı (İKVÖ) getirerek ve çalışma değişkenleri ile ilgili kapsamlı bir bakış açısı sağlayarak katkı sunması beklenmektedir.

## **2. Yöntem**

### **2.1 Araştırmanın Deseni**

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı, irrasyonel ilişki inançları, tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi, ilişki güveni ve ilişki doyumunu arasındaki ilişkileri ve bu değişkenlerin üniversite öğrencilerinin bağıllık düzeylerine etkisini incelemektir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda, çalışmanın araştırma deseni ilişkisel araştırma deseni olarak tasarlanmıştır. İlişkisel araştırma, en iyi bilinen tanımıyla, iki veya daha fazla değişken arasındaki ilişkileri herhangi bir manipülasyon olmadan incelemek olarak tanımlanmaktadır (Fraenkel, Wallen ve Huyn, 2012).

## 2.2 Örneklem

Bu çalışmanın katılımcıları, Batı Karadeniz Bölgesi'ndeki orta büyüklükteki bir üniversiteye kayıtlı, veri toplama zamanında romantik bir ilişki içinde yer alan lisans öğrencilerinden oluşmaktadır. Araştırmada veri toplama sürecinde çeşitli örnekleme yöntemleri kullanılmıştır. İlk olarak, katılımcılar uygun örnekleme kullanarak çalışmaya dahil edilmişlerdir. Uygunluk örnekleme, bir araştırmacı belirli bir zamanda mevcut bağlamdan veri toplamayı amaçladığı zaman kullanılır (Robson, 2011). Çalışma üniversitesinin uygun olmasının dışında seçilmesinin bir nedeni de, üniversite nüfusunun Türkiye'deki üniversite öğrencilerinin genel demografik özelliklerini yansıtmasıdır. Çalışmada kullanılan diğer bir örnekleme yöntemi ise gruplara özgü özelliklerle çalışırken kullanılan amaçlı örnekleme yöntemidir (Robson, 2011). Katılımcılardan, yukarıda bahsedilen üniversitede lisans öğrencisi olmak ve 18-26 yaşları arasında halihazırda romantik bir ilişki içinde olmak kriterlerini sağlamaları beklendiğinden bu çalışmada amaçlı örnekleme kullanılmıştır. Son olarak, araştırmacı potansiyel katılımcılara ulaşma olasılığını arttırmayı hedeflediğinden, kartopu örnekleme kullanılmıştır. Çalışmanın amacı için katılımcı bulmak zor olduğunda kullanılan kartopu örneklemesinde, mevcut katılımcıların çalışmaya diğer potansiyel katılımcıları davet etmesi beklenmektedir (Robson, 2011).

Bu örnekleme yöntemlerini uyguladıktan sonra, çalışmaya 560 öğrenci katılmıştır; Bununla birlikte, 31'i çalışma için uygun olmayan kriterlerden (romantik bir ilişkisi olmayan) veya soruların çoğunu boş bıraktıklarından dolayı veri kontrolü sürecinde çalışmadan çıkarılmıştır. Bunu takiben, ilişki durumunu evli olarak tanımlayan 17 katılımcı da, Stanley, Whitton ve Markman'ın (2004) da belirttiği üzere evlilik dinamiğinin bağlılık düzeyini farklı şekilde etkileyebilecek olması sebebiyle çalışmadan çıkarılmıştır. Son olarak, analizlerden önce veriler uç değerler açısından kontrol edilmiştir. Bu aşamada da, veri setinden 33 olgu çıkarılmış ve bu çalışmanın örneklem grubunu 479 katılımcı oluşturmuştur.

Katılımcıların 305'i (% 63,7) kadın, 174'ü (% 36,3) erkektir. Katılımcıların yaşları 18 ile 26 arasında değişmekte olup, ortalama yaş 21,32'dir (SS= 1,81). Ayrıca katılımcı ilişkilerinin süresi 1 ay ile 97 ay arasında değişmektedir ve ortalama 24.52 aydır (SS = 21.16). İlişki niteliği açısından katılımcıların çoğu (% 80,8) ilişkilerini ciddi bir ilişki olarak tanımlamıştır. Kalan katılımcıların %14,6'sı sevgili olduklarını, % 4,6'sı da nişanlı olduklarını belirtmişlerdir.

### 2.3 Veri Toplama Araçları

Bu çalışmada İlişki İnançları Ölçeği (Romans ve DeBord, 1994 akt., DeBord, Romans ve Krieschok, 1996), İlişkide Karar Verme Ölçeği (Vennum ve Fincham, 2011), İlişki İstikrarı Ölçeği (Rusbult, Martz ve Agnew, 1998) ve kişisel bilgi formu veri toplama araçları olarak kullanılmıştır.

#### *İlişkide Karar Verme Ölçeği*

Vennum ve Fincham (2011) tarafından bireylerin ilişkilerindeki karar verme süreçlerini, bir ilişki sürdürme konusunda kendilerine olan güvenlerini ve ilişkideki tehlike/uyarı işaretlerine yönelik farkındalık ve bu tehlikelerle başa çıkma becerilerini ölçmek amacıyla geçiştirmeye karşılık karar verme modeli temel alınarak geliştirilmiştir.

Başlangıçta 13 maddeden oluşan İKVÖ, açımlayıcı faktör analizi sonrasında 12 maddeye düşürülmüştür. Ardından doğrulayıcı faktör analizi yapılarak İKVÖ'nün 3 faktörden oluştuğu ve bu faktörlerin varyansın %63'ünü açıkladığı görülmüştür. Faktörler ilişki güveni, tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi ve karar verme olarak isimlendirilmiştir. İKVÖ'nün iç tutarlılık katsayıları, sırasıyla faktörler için .90, .80 ve .71 olarak hesaplanmıştır. 5'li Likert tipinde 12 maddeden oluşan İKVÖ'de 2 adet ters madde vardır (8. ve 12. maddeler).

Bu çalışmada, RDS araştırmacı tarafından çalışmanın amacı doğrultusunda Türkçeye uyarlanmıştır.

### *İlişki İnançları Ölçeği(İİÖ)*

Romans ve DeBord (Debord ve diğ., 1996) tarafından geliştirilen İlişki İnançları Ölçeği (İİÖ), bireylerin romantik ilişkilere yönelik inanç ve davranışlarını ölçmektedir. 71 maddeden oluşan orijinal ölçek, 6'lı Likert tipinde olup 9 faktöre sahiptir. "Kesinlikle katılmıyorum" 1 ile gösterilirken, 6 ise "kesinlikle katılıyorum" anlamına gelmektedir. İİÖ'de' ters madde yoktur ve toplam İİÖ puanları orijinal formda 71'den 426'ya değişmektedir. Yüksek puanlar irrasyonel ilişki inancının varlığını göstermektedir. İİÖ'nün iç tutarlılık hesaplaması için Cronbach alfa katsayısı kullanılmıştır. Cronbach alfa iç tutarlılık katsayıları, faktörler için .61 ile .91 ve toplam puan için .95 olan olarak hesaplanmıştır.

İİÖ, Gizir tarafından 2012'de Türkçeye uyarlanmıştır. İİÖ'nün Türkçe formu 5'li Likert tipinde olup 6 faktör ve 37 maddeden oluşmaktadır. Bu faktörler "Birbirimize karşı tamamen açık ve dürüst olmalıyız", "Birbirimizin zihnini okuyabilmeliyiz", "Her şeyi birlikte yapmalıyız", "Birbirimizin bütün ihtiyaçlarını karşılamalıyız" "Birbirimizi değiştirebilmeliyiz" ve "Romantik idealizm" olarak isimlendirilmiştir. Ters madde bulunmayan İİÖ'de "Hiç katılmıyorum" 1 ile gösterilirken, "Tamamen katılıyorum" ise 5 ile gösterilmektedir. Orijinal formda olduğu gibi, yüksek puanlar daha fazla irrasyonel ilişki inancının varlığına işaret etmektedir. İİÖ'nün iç tutarlılık hesaplaması için Cronbach alfa katsayısı kullanılmıştır. Cronbach alfa katsayısı faktörler için .78 ile .89 arasında olup toplam puan için ise .95 olarak belirtilmiştir.

Gizir (2012) ayrıca İİÖ'nün ikinci düzey doğrulayıcı faktör analizi yapıldıktan sonra irrasyonel ilişki inançları olarak adlandırılan tek boyutlu bir yapı gösterdiğini ve dolayısıyla toplam puanla kullanılabileceğini belirtmiştir;  $\chi^2 / df = 1.91$ ; GFI = .92; CFI = .96; RMSEA = 0,036 ve SRMR = 0,036'dır. Adaptasyon çalışması sonucunda, Türkiye'deki üniversite öğrencisi nüfusu üzerinde İİÖ'nün geçerli ve güvenilir bir ölçek olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır. Bu çalışmada RBQ'nun tek boyutlu modeli kullanılmıştır.

### *İlişki İstikrarı Ölçeği*

Rusbult, Martz ve Agnew (1998), bir ilişkideki istikrarı yatırım modeli değişkenleri ile birlikte yordamak üzere İlişki İstikrarı Ölçeğini (İİÖ) geliştirmişlerdir. 37 maddeden oluşan İİÖ, doyum, alternatiflerin niteliği, yatırım miktarı ve bağlılık olmak üzere dört boyuttan oluşmaktadır.

Büyüksahin, Hasta ve Hovardaoğlu (2005), İİÖ'yü romantik bir ilişkisi olan 325 üniversite öğrencisiyle Türkçe'ye uyarlamıştır. Doğrulayıcı ve açımlayıcı faktör analizleri neticesinde İİÖ, orijinal formunda olduğu gibi kabul edilmiş ve Türk kültüründe İİÖ'nün geçerli olduğu kanıtlanmıştır. Cronbach alfa iç tutarlılık katsayısı alt boyutların iç tutarlılığının iyi düzeyde olduğunu göstermiştir (doyum = .90, alternatiflerin niteliği = .84 ve yatırım miktarı .84). Büyüksahin ve Taluy (2008) tarafından yapılan bir başka çalışmada, İİÖ'nün bağlılık alt ölçeği, çeviri işlemlerinden sonra ölçeğe eklenmiştir. Mevcut alanyazın ile ilgili olarak, alt ölçeğin psikometrik özellikleri hakkında yayınlanmış bir çalışma yoktur. Ancak, bağlılık alt ölçeğinin geçerlilik ve güvenilirlik kanıtı, evli (Dedekorkut, 2015) ve flört eden bireyler (Toplu Demirtaş, Hatipoğlu Sümer ve White, 2013) üzerinde yapılan diğer çalışmalarla kanıtlanmıştır. Bu çalışmalarda Cronbach alfa düzeyi sırasıyla .87 ve .93 olarak bulunmuştur.

### *Kişisel Bilgi Formu*

Katılımcıların temel demografik özelliklerini ve ilişki özelliklerini daha iyi anlamak için araştırmacı tarafından bir kişisel bilgi formu geliştirilmiştir. Bu formda katılımcılar cinsiyet, yaş, fakülte, ilişki süresi ve ilişkinin türü (flört, ciddi ilişki ve nişanlı) bilgilerini belirtmişlerdir. Ayrıca, kartopu örneklemesinden kaynaklanabilecek araştırmaya uygunsuz katılımın önlenmesi için, ilişki durumu bilgisi de (Şu an devam eden bir ilişkiniz var mı?) çalışmanın kontrol sorusu olarak eklenmiştir.

## 2.4 Veri Analizi

Bu arařtırmada irrasyonel iliřki inançları, tehlike/uyarı iřaretleri bilgisi, iliřki güveni, doyum ve baęlılık deęiřkenleri arasındaki iliřkileri belirleyebilmek amacıyla kurulan yapısal model, Yapısal Eřitlik Modellemesi (YEM) analizi kullanılarak AMOS 21 (Arbuckle, 2012) programı aracılıęı ile sınanmıřtır. Model testinden önce ise SPSS 22 (IBM Corp., 2013) programı kullanılarak YEM analizi iin gerekli olan varsayımlar kontrol edilmiř ve betimsel analizler gerekleřtirilmiřtir.

## 3. Bulgular

İrrasyonel iliřki inançları, tehlike/uyarı iřaretleri bilgisi, iliřki güveni, doyum ve baęlılık arasındaki doęrudan ve dolaylı iliřkilerin incelendięi bu arařtırmada kurulan yapısal modelin cinsiyete gre farklılařıp farklılařmadıęını belirlemek iin ncelikli olarak oklu-grup doęrulayıcı faktr analizi kullanılarak lm modeli test edilmiřtir. oklu grup DFA sonuları lm modelinin cinsiyete gre farklılařmadıęını ortaya koyduęundan ( $\Delta CFI$  ve  $\Delta TLI < .01$ ), nerilen yapısal modelin sınanmasına tek grup yapısal model testi ile devam edilmiřtir. YEM analiz sonuları Tablo 16'da verilen uyum iyilięi indeksleri ( $\chi^2/df$ -oranı, GFI, CFI, TLI, RMSEA VE SRMR) ve bu indekslere iliřkin belirtilen sınır deęerler gz nne alınarak deęerlendirilmiřtir.

nerilen modelde yer alan deęiřkenler arasındaki doęrudan ve dolaylı iliřkileri belirlemek amacıyla yapısal model sınanmıř ve YEM analizi sonuları test edilen modelin iyi uyum gsterdięine iřaret etmiřtir ( $\chi^2=1,45$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.228$ ,  $\chi^2/df=1.45$ ,  $CFI=.99$ ,  $GFI=.99$ ,  $TLI=.99$ ,  $RMSEA=.03$ ,  $SRMR=.01$ ). Analiz sonularına gre baęlılıęın iindeki varyansın %28'ini irrasyonel iliřki inançları, tehlike/uyarı iřaretleri bilgisi, iliřki güveni ve doyum deęiřkenlerinin aıkladıęı bulunmuřtur. nerilen modelde yer alan 9 doęrudan yolun 8'i, 5 dolaylı yolun ise tamamı anlamlı bulunmuřtur. Doęrudan yollar incelendięinde, sonu deęiřkeni olarak ele alınan baęlılık, iliřki güveni ve doyum tarafından anlamlı ve pozitif olarak; tehlike/uyarı iřaretleri bilgisi tarafından ise anlamlı ve negatif olarak

yordanmaktadır. Ayrıca ilişki güveni ve irrasyonel ilişki inançları doyum değişkenini anlamlı ve olumlu bir şekilde yordamaktadır. Doğrudan ilişkiler arasında irrasyonel ilişki inançlarının tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi ve ilişki güveni aracı değişkenlerini anlamlı ve pozitif olarak yordadığı da elde edilen sonuçlar arasındadır.

Dolaylı yollar incelendiğinde hipotezleri doğrulayan sonuçlar elde edilmiştir. Bu doğrultuda ilişkide karar verme değişkenlerinin (tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi ve ilişki güveni) irrasyonel ilişki inançları ve doyum arasındaki ilişkiye kısmi aracılık ettiği bulunmuştur. Ayrıca ilişki güveni değişkeninin tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi ve doyum arasındaki rolü incelendiğinde ilişki güveni değişkeninin bu ilişkiye tam aracılık ettiği görülmektedir. İlişkide karar verme değişkenleri (tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi ve ilişki güveni) ile bağlılık arasındaki ilişkinin ise doyumun kısmi aracılık rolü ile sağlandığı elde edilen sonuçlar arasındadır.

#### **4. Tartışma**

##### **4.1 Doğrudan Etkilerin Tartışılması**

Temel araştırma sorusundaki cinsiyet etkilerini incelemek amacıyla çoklu grup yapısal eşitlik modeli analizi uygulanmıştır. Sonuçlar ölçme değişmezliğini gösterdiğinden, tek örneklem modeli kullanılarak yapısal model testi uygulanmıştır. Bu nedenle, tek örneklem modeli bulguları dikkate alınarak sonuçlar tartışılmıştır.

Bağımsız örneklem t-testi analizi sonucunda ortaya çıkan bağlılık üzerindeki önemli cinsiyet etkisine rağmen, önerilen model cinsiyete göre farklılık göstermemiştir. Bu bulgu ilgili alanyazın ile paralellik göstermektedir. Örneğin, Bui, Peplau ve Hill (1996) meta-analiz çalışmasında Rusbult'un yatırım modelini incelemiş ve değişkenler arasındaki ilişkilerin cinsiyete göre farklılık göstermediğini ortaya koymuştur. Buna ek olarak, doyum hem bu çalışmada hem de bir meta-analiz çalışmasında (Le ve Agnew, 2003), bağlılığın en güçlü yordayıcısı olarak bulunmuştur. Mevcut bulgulara benzer sonuçlar veren doyum



üzerine alanyazın sonuçları da bu bulguyu tartışmak için zengin bir bilgi kaynağı olabilir. Örneğin, hem Türkiye'de (Beştav, 2007; Çürükvelioğlu, 2012; Aslan-Yılmaz, 2019) hem de diğer ülkelerde de yapılmış çalışmalar (Wongpakaran ve diğ., 2012; Le ve Agnew, 2003) cinsiyetin doyum üzerinde anlamlı bir değişken olmadığını ortaya koymuştur. Bu açıklamalar ışığında bakıldığında doyumun bağlılık bileşenleri arasında dayanıklı bir değişken olduğu söylenebilir. Mevcut çalışma sonucu ortaya çıkan bu bulgunun yukarıdaki bilgiler göz önüne alındığında çok şaşırtıcı olmadığı görülmektedir.

Elde edilen sonuçlara göre irrasyonel ilişki inançları, tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi, ilişki güveni ve doyum değişkenleri bağlılıktaki varyansın % 28'ini açıklamıştır. Bu durum bağlılığı açıklayabilmek için halen bilinmeyen kısımların olduğunu belirtmektedir. Değişkenlerin yordama gücü göz önüne alındığında ise henüz hiç bir çalışmanın bu değişkenleri bir model içinde kullanmadığından bu çalışmadaki mevcut bulgu alanyazın ile doğrudan karşılaştırılamaz. Ancak, aynı kültürde Öztekin (2016) tarafından gerçekleştirilmiş olan çalışma, mevcut araştırmanın sonuçlarının değerlendirilmesinde bir kaynak olarak kullanılabilir. Öztekin'in (2016) çalışmasında, bağlılıktaki varyansın %48'i bağlanma stilleri ve ilişki inançları ile açıklanmıştır. Her bir değişkenin yordayıcı rollerini incelendiğinde ise, bağlanma stillerinin bağlılığa önemli miktarda (%22) katkıda bulunduğu açıkça görülmektedir. Yukarıda bahsedilen bilgiler göz önüne alındığında, mevcut çalışmanın bağlılığı açıklama gücü, bağlama stilleri değişkeninin yokluğunda anlamlı olabilir.

Bu çalışmada irrasyonel ilişki inançları aracı değişkenlerin yanı sıra bağlılık ile de pozitif olarak ilişkilendirilmiştir. Alanyazın değerlendirildiğinde, bunun beklenmedik bir bulgu olduğu ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu durum, bazı alternatif bakış açıları ile açıklanabilir.

İlk olarak, bu mevcut bulgu ölçme etkisi altında tartışılmalıdır. Bu çalışmada katılımcıların irrasyonel ilişki inançları, İlişki İnançları Ölçeği ile ölçülmüştür ve

Türkiye'de bu ölçeği kullanarak gerçekleştirilen bir araştırma da mevcut çalışmanın bulgularına paralel sonuçlar ortaya koymuştur (Baltacıoğlu, 2016). Ayrıca, bu çalışmalar sadece ulusal araştırmalarla sınırlı değil; uluslararası araştırmaları da kapsamaktadır (DeBord, Romans ve Krieshock, 1996; Epstein ve Baucom, 1992). Açıkçası, İlişki İnançları Ölçeği psikometrik ölçütleri çok iyi karşıladığı için, değişkenler arasında pozitif bir ilişkinin bulunması alanda çalışan araştırmacılar için beklenmeyen bir durum olmuştur.

İlişki İnançları Ölçeği Türkçe versiyonunda da yeteri kadar psikometrik özellikleri taşıyor olmasına rağmen, Likert tipi puanlama orijinal ölçekten farklıdır. Türkçe versiyonunda İlişki İnançları Ölçeği katılımcılara 5'li Likert tipinde uygulanmıştır. Bu durum ölçeğin ortalama puanlarını olumlu yönde etkilemiş olabilir. Örneğin, bir katılımcı aynı maddeyi 6'lı Likert tipi ölçekte "3" olarak seçecekken 5'li Likert tipi ölçekte "4" olarak seçebilir. Ayrıca, bu olası etki hepsi pozitif olan maddelerle bağlantılı olarak ortaya çıkmış da olabilir. Örneğin, bir önceki örnekte açıklandığı gibi "Partnerim bana karşı her zaman açık ve dürüst olmalı" ya da "Partnerim bütün ihtiyaçlarımı karşılayabilmeli" gibi olumlu olarak yazılmış maddeler böyle bir durumun ortaya çıkmasına sebep olabilir. Dolayısıyla İİÖ'den yüksek puanların elde edilmesi daha kolaylaşmaktadır. Diğer bir değişle, İİÖ'nün olumlu olarak yazılmış maddelere sahip olması ve puanlama da 6'lı Likert ölçek yerine 5'li Likert ölçeğin kullanılması irrasyonel ilişki inançlarında önceden tahmin edilenden daha yüksek puanların alınmasına sebep olmuş gibi görünmektedir.

İrrasyonel ilişki inançları üzerinde cinsiyet değişkenininie göre farklılıklar dikkate alındığında erkeklerin kadınlardan daha fazla irrasyonel ilişki inançlarına sahip olduğu bulunmuştur. Ancak, bu farklılık istatistiksel olarak anlamlı değildir. Literatürde bu bulguyu destekleyen bazı araştırmalar mevcuttur (Eşiyok ve Kıran-Esen, 2017; Gizir, 2013; Küçükarslan ve Gizir, 2014; Hembrecht, 2009). Özellikle, Küçükarslan ve Gizir (2014) "aşk bir yolunu bulur" ve "ilk görüşte aşk" boyutlarında erkek katılımcıların kadınlardan daha yüksek puanlara sahip

olduklarını bulmuşlardır. Slavinskienė ve Žardeckaitė-Matulaitienė (2012) ise erkeklerin kadınlardan daha çok cinsel mükemmeliyetçilik ifade ettiklerini belirtmişlerdir. Ek olarak, Humbrecht (2009), erkeklerin zihin okuma beklentisinin kadınlardan daha fazla olduğunu ifade etmiştir. Türkiye’de farklı alanlarda erkekler ve kadınların bazı belirli davranışları sergilemeleri beklenmektedir. Örneğin, erkeklerden evin geçimi için para getirmeleri beklenirken kadınlar genellikle ev işlerinden ve çocukların bakımından sorumludurlar. Romantik ilişkiler göz önüne alındığında, cinsiyet rollerinin etkisi ilişkinin başlatılması ve sürdürülmesi süreçlerinde gözlenmektedir (Eryılmaz ve Ercan, 2010). Özellikle, ilişkinin başlatılması ve ilişkide romantik (duygusal) ifadelerin söylenmesi erkeklerden beklenmektedir. Sonuç olarak, bu tarz kalıpyargılar erkeklerin daha çok irrasyonel ilişki inançlarına sahip olmaları üzerinde etkili olmuş olabilir (Öcal-Yüceol; 2016). Ayrıca, cinsiyet rollerinin de oluşumunda etkisi olan kültürel etkenler bu bulguda etkili olmuş olabilir. Daha da netleştirmek gerekirse, irrasyonel ilişki inançları hakkındaki alanyazın toplulukçu ya da bireyci olmak üzere farklı kültür özelliklerine bağlı olarak bu konuda farklı bulgular barındırmaktadır. Örneğin, toplulukçu bir kültüre sahip olarak bilinen Türkiye’de yapılan çalışmalar irrasyonel ilişki inançlarının bağlılık, doyum ve evlilik tutumları (Karabacak ve Çiftçi, 2016; Sarı ve Owen, 2016) ile arasında pozitif bir ilişki olduğunu ortaya koyarken, alanyazında bireyci kültürlere sahip oldukları kabul edilen Avrupa ülkelerinde yapılan bir çalışma (Fitzpatrick ve Sollie, 1999) ise irrasyonel olmayan ilişki inançları ile bağlılık ve doyum arasında negatif bir ilişki olduğunu göstermektedir. Bahsedilen araştırmaların sonuçları göz önüne alındığında, toplulukçu ya da bireyci bir kültürde yaşıyor olmanın bireyin irrasyonel ilişki inançları ve cinsiyet rolleri hakkındaki algıları üzerinde etkili olduğu görülmektedir.

#### **4.2 Dolaylı Etkilerin Tartışılması**

Hipotez 2’de, İKV değişkenleri (tehlike/uyarı işaretleri ve ilişki güveni) ile bağlılık arasındaki ilişkinin doyum aracılığı ile sağlanabileceği varsayılmıştır. Yapılan

analizler bu hipotezi doğrulamıştır ve doyumun bağlılık üzerine olan etkisini göz önüne aldığımızda sonuçlar alanyazın ile paralellik göstermiştir.

Yatırım modeli değişkenlerinin incelendiği çalışmalar bu çalışmanın sonucu ile benzer sonucu ortaya koymuştur: doyum, bağlılığı oluşturan en kuvvetli bileşen olarak tespit edilmiştir (Le & Agnew, 2003; Durko & Petrick, 2015). Ayrıca, sosyal bilişsel kuram, öz-yeterlik inancının olumlu etkilerinin, düşünce, davranış ve duyguları etkileyerek ilişki sonuçları üzerindeki rolünün önemini vurgulamıştır. Bu nedenle, mevcut çalışma bulgularına dayanarak, bir ilişkiyi sürdürme inancının ve tehlike/uyarı işaretleri konusunda bilgili olma derecesinin, duyguları ve düşünceleri doğrudan ve dolaylı olarak etkilemesi mümkündür. Özellikle, ilişki güveni ögesi için bu mevcut bulgu daha anlamlıdır. Ayrıca, sosyal bilişsel kuramın karşılıklılık ilkesi bu bulguyu yorumlamak için kullanılabilir. Doğrudan deneyimler, yeterlilik inancının kaynaklarından biri olduğundan, katılımcıların ilişkilerinin ilk zamanlarında yaşadıkları deneyimler, ilişki güveninde bir artışa yol açabilecek ve böylece doyum ve bağlılığı olumlu yönde etkileyebilecektir.

Hipotez 3'te, İKV değişkenlerinin (tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi ve ilişki güveni) irrasyonel ilişki inançları ve doyum arasındaki aracı rolü incelenmiştir. Sonuçlar, tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi ve ilişki güveninin, irrasyonel olmayan ilişki inançları ve doyum arasındaki ilişkiye kısmen aracılık ettiğini göstermiştir. Bu sonuç iki açıdan yorumlanabilir. İlk olarak, irrasyonel ilişki inançlarının ilişki çıktıkları üzerindeki olumsuz rolünü vurgulayan çalışmalar dikkate alındığında bu sonucun beklenmedik bir sonuç olduğu söylenebilir. Diğer taraftan, kültürel faktörlerin etkileri ve İlişki İnançları Ölçeğinin psikometrik özellikleri göz önüne alındığında bu sonucun mantıklı ve anlaşılabilir bir sonuç olduğu görülmektedir.

İlişki güveni değişkeni açısından, bu çalışmanın bulguları, hem ilişki güveni hem de ilişki yeterliliği hakkındaki alanyazın birlikte göz önünde bulundurularak tartışılabilir. Mevcut çalışmanın sonuçları ilişki güveninin doyum ile pozitif yönde ilişkili olduğunu ortaya koymuştur. Bu sonuca paralel olarak Deitz,

Anderson, Johnson, Hardy, Zheng ve Liu (2015) tarafından gerçekleştirilmiş olan bir çalışmada benzer bir sonuç elde edilmiş ve ilişki güveni değişkeninin doyum ile pozitif bir ilişki içerisinde olduğu belirtilmiştir. Benzer şekilde, romantik ilişkilerde öz-yeterlilik ögesini inceleyen birkaç araştırma bulunmaktadır. Örneğin, Riggio ve diğ., (2013) romantik ilişkilerde öz-yeterlilik algısının doyumun bir yordayıcısı olduğunu belirtmiştir. Bandura'ya (1997) göre, bireyin ilişkide partner olma konusundaki inançları, davranışlar, duygular ve düşünceler üzerinde değişikliklere sebep olduğundan ilişki çıktılarında da etkilidir (akt. Riggio ve diğ., 2013). Bandura'nın öz-yeterlilik üzerine olan açıklamaları göz önüne alındığında, ilişki güveni ögesinin irrasyonel ilişki inançları ve doyum ögeleri arasındaki aracı rolü anlamlı görülmektedir. Diğer bir deyişle, ilişki güveni açısından daha çok olan partner, ilişkide "yapabilirim" inançlarına daha çok sahiptir ve bu tarz bir düşünce de ilişkide daha olumlu sonuçlara sebep olabilir.

İrrasyonel ilişki inançları ve doyum arasındaki ilişkide, tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisinin aracı rolü ile ilgili olarak, bu çalışmanın bulguları literatürle benzer sonuçlar göstermiştir. Geçirtirmeye karşı karar verme modeline bakıldığında, ilişkideki tehlike/uyarı işaretlerinden habersiz olmak, ilişkilerde değişkenliklerin yaşandığının göstergesidir. Clifford ve diğ., (2017) ilişki geçiş zamanlarındaki ilişki hakkındaki konuşmaların ilk başlarda ilişki doyumuyla olumsuz yönde ilişkili olduğunu ancak ilişkide belirsizliğin 14 aydan sonra ilişkide doyum ögesini yordayamadığını ortaya koymuştur. Bu bilgiler ışığında, mevcut çalışmanın bulguları bu sonuçla benzerlik göstermektedir. Bir diğer ifadeyle, eğer bir bireyin tehlike/uyarı işaretleri farkındalık düzeyi artarsa o ilişkide geçirtirme riski de düşmektedir ve bu da daha yüksek doyum seviyesinin oluşmasına sebep olabilir. Ek olarak, ilişki güveninde olduğu gibi, bir kişinin ilişkideki tehlike/uyarı işaretlerini fark edebileceğine inanması durumunda ilişki doyumunun artabileceği söylenebilir.

Hipotez 4'te, tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi ile doyum arasındaki ilişkinin, ilişki güveni aracılığı ile sağlandığı ve aracılık etkisinin tam olduğu bulunmuştur. Bu sonuç mevcut alanyazın ile paralellik göstermektedir ve sosyal bilişsel teori dikkate alındığında da oldukça anlamlıdır. Giriş bölümünde açıklandığı gibi, bireyler belirli bir konu hakkında her ne kadar yeterli farkındalığa sahip olsalar da gerekli performansın gösterilebilmesi için özgüven ya da öz-yeterlilik algısına sahip olmaları gerekmektedir (Wood ve Bandura, 1989). Diğer bir deyişle, Bandura (1981) ne yapacağını biliyor olmanın yeterliliğe ya da o eylemi gerçekleştirmeye yeterli olmadığını ifade etmiştir.

Bununla birlikte, bir becerinin gerçekleştirilmesi bilişsel, sosyal ve motor becerilerin belirli bir eyleme yönelik ortaya koyulmasını gerektirmektedir. Yetenekleri hakkındaki algıları düşük olan ya da kendilerinin yeterli olmadığını düşünen bireyler karşılıklarına çıkan engelleri abartmaya ve sonucunda pes etmeye daha meyillidirler. Bu bilgi göz önüne alındığında, ilişki güveninin aracılık rolü tutarlı görünmektedir. Ayrıca, tam arabuluculuk bulgusuna ulaşılmasının olası bir nedeni, katılımcıların ilişki güven düzeyleriyle ilgili olabilir. Tablo 12, ilişki güveni ölçeği için en yüksek puanın 20 olduğunu göstermektedir. Katılımcıların bu ölçekteki ortalama puanlarını göz önüne aldığımızda, çalışmaya katılan katılımcıların bir ilişkiyi yönetebilme konusunda kendilerine güvendikleri sonucu çıkarılabilir.

#### **4.3 Gelecekteki Çalışmalar için Öneriler**

Diğer yapılan çalışmalarda olduğu gibi, bu çalışmada da ileride yapılacak olan araştırmalar için bazı önerilerde bulunulmuştur. Öncelikle, İlişkide Karar Verme Ölçeğinin karar verme boyutu, bu çalışmada düşük güvenilirliğe sahip olarak bulunmuştur. Bu nedenle, İlişkide Karar Verme Ölçeği aynı örnek dahil etme kriterleri kullanılarak tekrar test edilmelidir.

Bu çalışmada, irrasyonel ilişki inançları ile çalışma değişkenleri arasındaki ilişki (doyum, tehlike/uyarı işaretleri bilgisi ve ilişki güveni) hipotezlerin aksine pozitif

bulunmuştur. Ortaya çıkan bu çelişki için olası bir açıklama ölçme aracının özellikleriyle ilgili yapılabilir. Mevcut alanyazınla ilgili, irrasyonel ilişki inançları ile ilişki değişkenleri arasındaki ilişki, araştırmalarda kullanılan araç özelliklerine bağlı genellikle olumlu ya da olumsuz sonuçlar olarak farklılık gösterebilmektedir. Bu nedenle, gelecekteki araştırmacılar için irrasyonel ilişki inancını ölçerken farklı araçlar kullanarak aynı modeli test etmeleri yararlı görünmektedir. Bu şekilde, gelecekteki araştırmacılar çalışmalarındaki ölçme etkisinin farkında olabilirler. Ayrıca, çalışma değişkenleri arasındaki ilişkilerin kültürel etkilerini bulmak için, çoklu grup analiz kullanarak oluşturulan modeli test etmek için kültürlerarası bir çalışma tasarlanabilir. Başka bir deyişle, çoklu grup analizini kullanmak, modelde kültürel faktörlerin neden olduğu farklılıkları görmek isteyen araştırmacılara zengin bilgi sağlayabilir. Böylece, bağlılık ile ilgili faktörler hakkında zengin bilgi sağlayabilecek farklı kültürel lenslerden bulgular tartışılabilir.

İleride yapılacak olan çalışmalar, ilişkilerin dinamiklerini daha iyi anlayabilmek için farklı örneklerle test edilmelidir. Örneğin, evli insanlarla veya üniversite öğrencisi olmayan bireylerle yapılacak çalışmalar gelecekteki çalışmalara dâhil edilmelidir. Ayrıca, romantik ilişki çalışmalarında bir adım daha ileri gitmek için Aktör-Partner Karşılıklı Bağımlılık Modeli (APIM) kullanılarak çalışmalar yapılmalı ve bu çalışmada oluşturulan modeldeki ilişkiler Aktör-Partner Karşılıklı Bağımlılık Modeli ile araştırılmalıdır.

Gelecekteki araştırmacılar çalışmalarını, bağlılık ile önemli ölçüde ilişkili bulunan bağlanma stilleri, çatışma yönetimi ve problem çözme gibi diğer ilgili değişkenlerle somutlaştırmalıdır. Ayrıca, bu çalışmanın bulguları ve alanyazındaki meta-analiz çalışmaları dikkate alındığında, ilişki doyumu, bağlılığın en güçlü belirleyicisi olarak görülmektedir. Bu nedenle, nitel veya karma yöntem çalışmaları ile doyumu etkileyen faktörlere dikkat etmek gelecekteki çalışmalar için önemli görünmektedir.

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